

SNOWY FOR LUCK

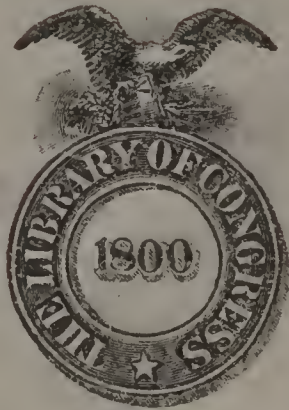
BY

ARTHUR RUSSELL

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ILLUSTRATED BY KURT WIESE

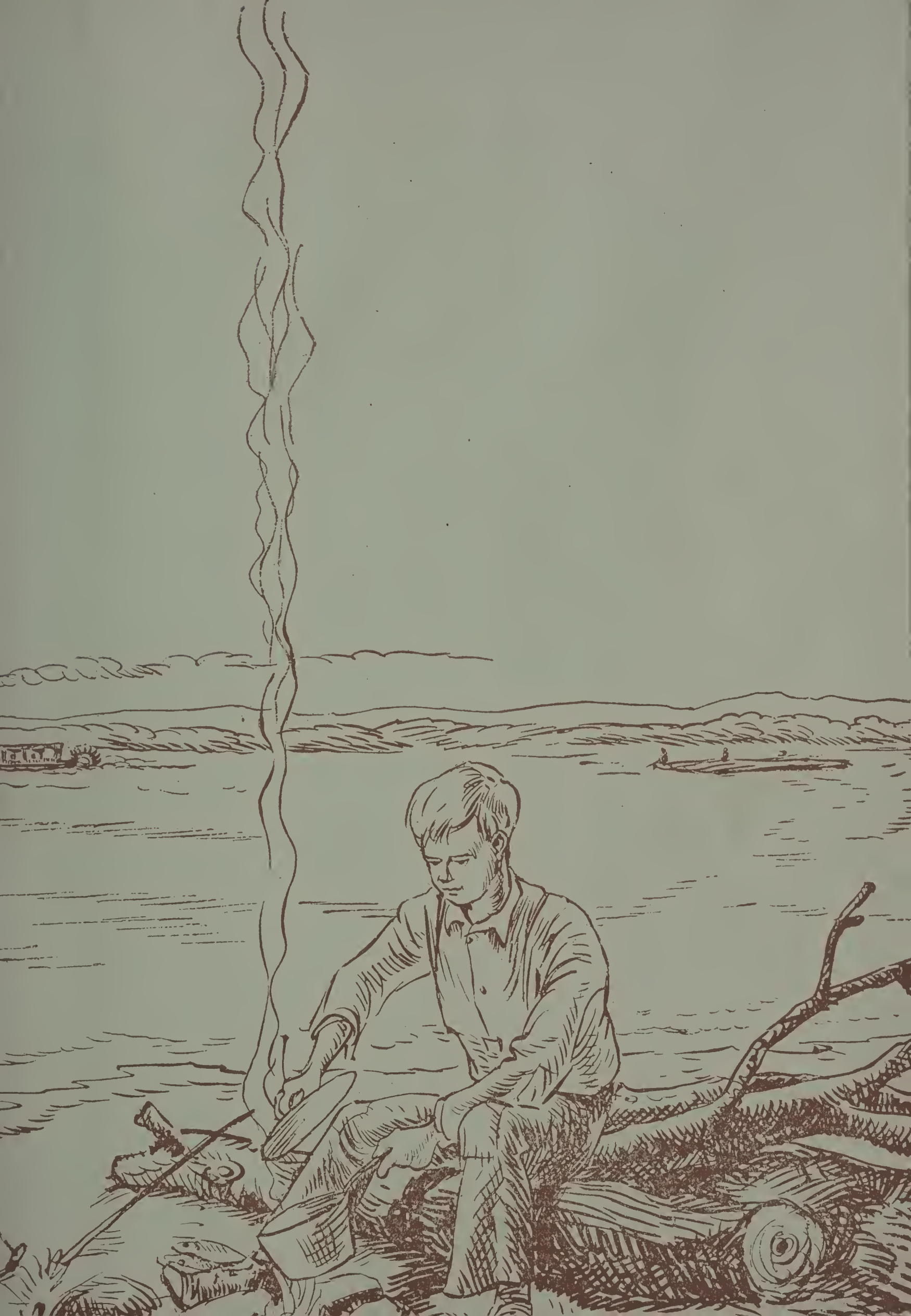


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SNOWY FOR LUCK





SNOWY CHOSE A DOZEN LARGE ORANGES.

SNOWY FOR LUCK

By
ARTHUR RUSSELL *Goode*



Pictures by
KURT WIESE

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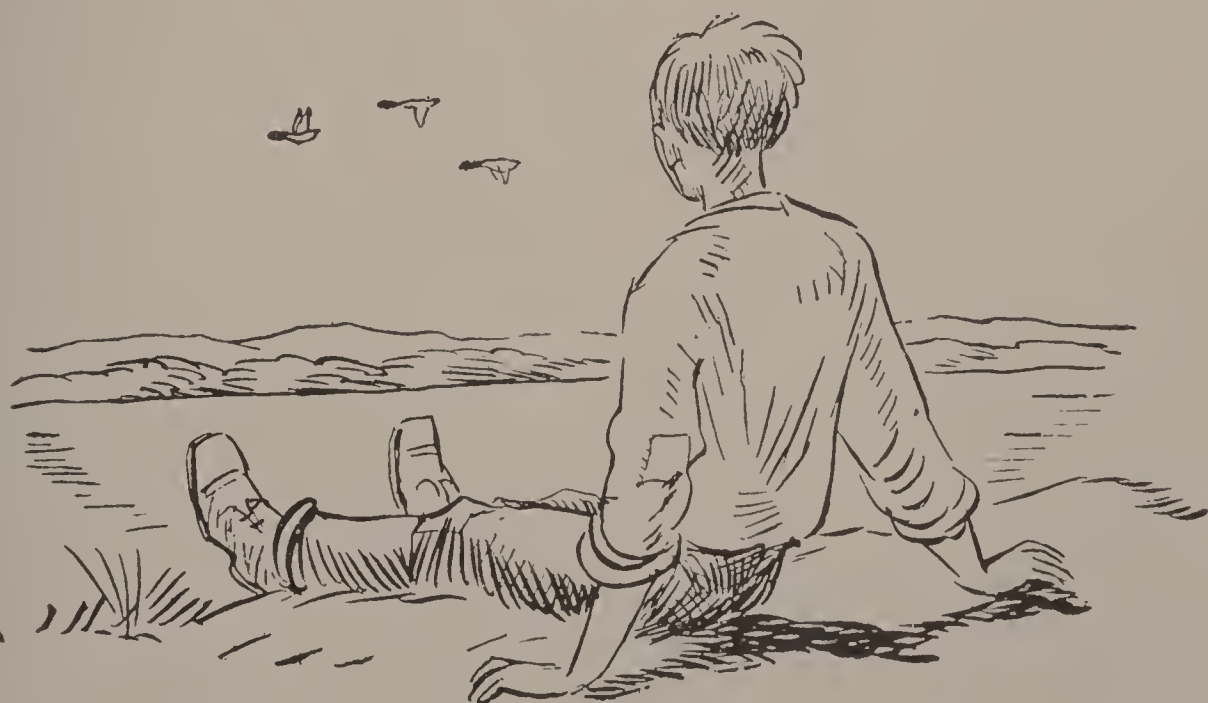
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"SNOWY," HE CALLED.

"SNOWY"

CHAPTER 1

SLOWLY the boy crept up and hid behind a pile of logs that were piled on the river bank.

"Snowy!" he called, lifting his voice and letting it die gradually away. Without a glance to see whether his call had had any effect, he darted off as fast as his legs could carry him.

At what he thought was a safe distance he stopped and looked back. He made a trumpet

of his hands, and again cried, “Snowy! Snowy for luck!”

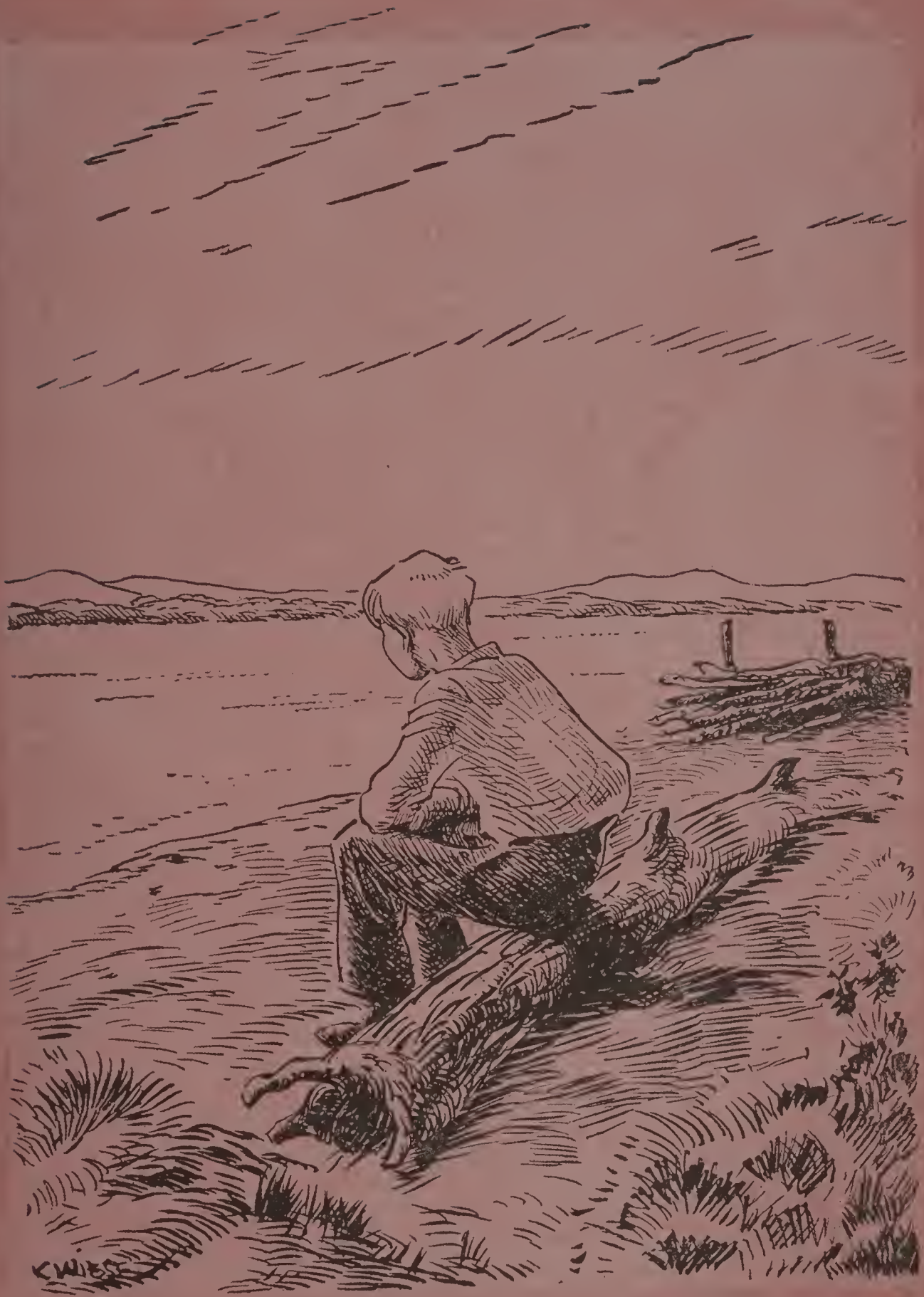
These were the words he had heard his father use only the day before, and, although he did not know why white-haired boys were supposed to be luckier than those having ginger or black hair, he could not fail to see that they suited the white-headed boy.

Snowy knew that something was expected of him, so he shook a grimy fist at his young tormentor, causing the boy again to take to his heels.

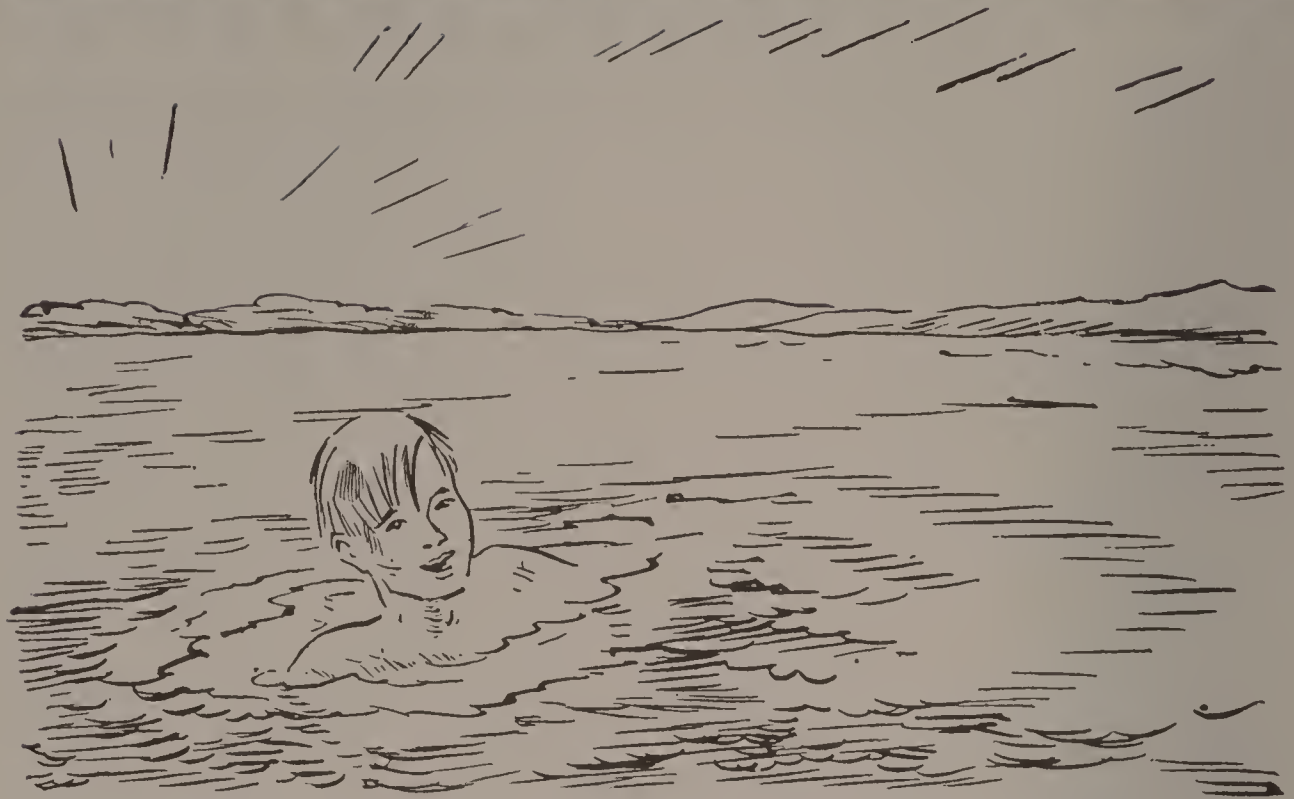
Snowy laughed. Then, settling down again on a log, he looked around. Before him was the Mississippi, one of America’s greatest rivers—his river—as he loved to think of it. He pictured the many other streams that fed the mighty river, and its many tributaries.

Snowy was well known on the river. He loved the Mississippi. It was his home, and he was never happier than when rowing on its waters or camping on its banks.

The river boy could swim like a fish. He would dive into the river at all times, even on the coldest of mornings, or when the river was running a banker.



BEFORE HIM WAS THE MISSISSIPPI.



HE WOULD DIVE INTO THE RIVER AT ALL TIMES.

It cost Snowy little to live. There were fish in the river, and duck and other wild fowl along its banks. The boy had all the cunning of an Indian. To him it was a simple matter to catch a fish or snare a bird. What little money he needed he earned by collecting the drift-wood brought down by the stream. This he would stack in heaps along the banks. Later he would trade it to steamers plying up and down the river.

"Snowy for luck!"

Snowy glanced up as the cry came to him faintly; but there was no sign of the other boy.

“Silly!” he muttered. “What chance does luck have of coming my way? I’m only a waif—a river kid.”

Snowy sighed. For the first time since he could remember he was feeling downhearted. He could not help comparing the well-dressed lads whom he knew with his own ragged self. They had nothing to worry them; every comfort for which they could wish was theirs.

As his eyes wandered toward the river, the feeling of envy passed. “It’s mine!” he murmured, gazing at the clear water, shining in the sun like silver. “Mine!”

Suddenly he became alert. His keen ears had caught the sound of water splashing against a distant log. He kept his eyes fixed on the bend of the stream, a few hundred yards distant. He was waiting for the first sign of the floating timber.

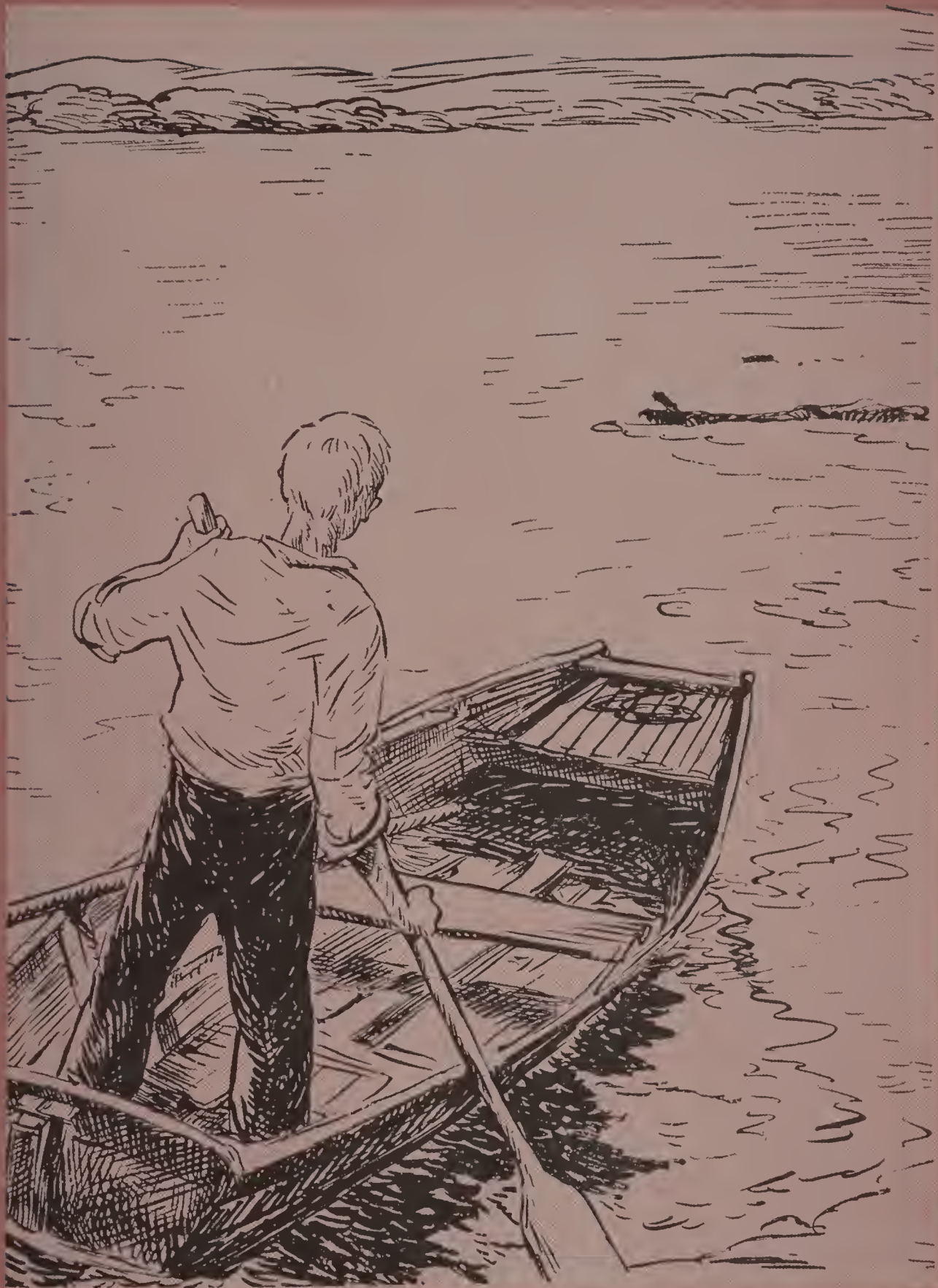
He knew just when to act. Much practice had made him expert. It did not take him long to reach his boat. He threw in an oar, and stepped into the patched-up thing which shipped water and threatened to collapse beneath him at any moment; and, with the other oar, he pushed off from the bank. A few sec-

onds later he was in midstream, ready to grapple with the tree, the branches of which were showing at the bend of the river. The stream was in flood. The tree had been torn up by the roots and was moving down the stream.

He rowed toward it, his eyes lighting up with glee as he saw its size. Around his waist he had coiled a length of light but strong rope. He rowed as near to the tree as he thought safe, and put down the oars; then, fully clothed, dived into the deep water. The boat, freed of his weight, and feeling the pull of the current, drifted downstream.

Presently a little white head broke the water almost beside the tree. Catching hold of a branch, the boy drew himself up. He balanced himself on a fork of the tree as he uncoiled the rope from his body.

Farther into the tree, which was being flung hither and thither by the force of the waters, he climbed. He tied one end of the rope around the trunk of the tree and then with the other end fastened round his body dived into the stream again. He swam to the bank and soon had the tree fastened securely to a pile driven into the ground.



HE ROWED TOWARD IT.



THE BOY DREW HIMSELF UP.

Snowy next went after his boat. This was his most precious possession. He ran along the slippery bank and was soon opposite the little craft which, almost full of water, was going broadside with the stream. Into the water went Snowy again. A few strokes and he was beside the boat. He gripped one side and drew himself into the half-swamped craft. At once he began to bail out the water and then, seizing the oars, he was again master.

Less than five minutes later he was on the bank. He tied up his boat and began to work



FOR HOURS HE WOULD SIT ON THE RIVER BANK.

at the tree. He drew it this way and that. He coaxed and, at times, pulled at it with all his strength, until at last he had it clear of the water.

With his axe he then lopped off the smaller limbs, “tidying up” as he called it. The log was one of the biggest he had yet handled, and he was proud of its capture.

So interested was he in his work that he failed to notice the return of his little tormentor, Eric Wilson. This boy had recently come to the river town with his parents. Everything was new to the little fellow. For hours at a time he would sit on the river bank, watching the steamers and their barges laden with goods or lumber, as they passed up and down the stream.

It was here that he had met Snowy. As he watched the apparently care-free boy go about his little jobs, he was filled with envy. Snowy had no home ties, no lessons to be learned, and nothing to worry him. Eric thought Snowy’s life an ideal one.

He had returned just in time to see Snowy bring in the big tree, work it to the bank, and roll it clear of the water. To Eric it all seemed

very easy. He really thought, small though he was, that he could do it as well himself. How he should like to try!

At that moment, another log, much smaller than the first, was washed round the bend.

Eric glanced at Snowy. The river boy was still so busy with his axe that he had not noticed the second log. Eric stole down to the water's edge and pulled in the boat by its painter. With a quick glance at Snowy, he stepped in. It was the first time he had been in a boat, and a spasm of fear went through him as the little vessel was cradled by the waters. Still he was game. He freed the painter and, gripping the oars, tried to use them as he had seen Snowy do. Two strokes he made and the light craft moved forward; but, dipping the oars too deeply on the third stroke, he caught them on a submerged log and was nearly thrown overboard.

Eric tried again. The splashing of the oars made Snowy look up. A smile overspread his freckled face as he saw what Eric was doing.

"He's plucky!" he murmured admiringly. "I wonder how long he'll last!"

He laid his axe aside and, folding his arms,



HE WAS NEARLY THROWN OVERBOARD.

stood and watched. Suddenly the tree swung round and struck the boat on its side, throwing Eric into the water.

Snowy's gasp of dismay was lost in a cry from behind him.

"My boy! My boy!"

It was Eric's mother. She had caught sight of her son just as he disappeared into the water. Wringing her hands hopelessly, she ran along the edge of the water frantic with fear.



“YOU STAY HERE, MA’AM,” HE ORDERED.

“My boy! My poor boy!” she cried. “He will be drowned!”

Snowy saw that the woman was about to jump into the river, so he rushed forward and pushed her aside.

“You stay here, ma’am,” he ordered, and, young though he was, his voice held a note of command which she obeyed. “I’ll bring him out.”

The swim was nothing to Snowy. He quickly reached the little fellow who was bravely striking out in his efforts to keep afloat. Snowy put a hand beneath the boy and held him up. With his free hand he paddled slowly towards the bank.

As he pushed the boy out of the water the mother ran forward. She seized the boy in her arms.

“My boy! My little boy!” she cried.



THE BOAT LOOKED NOT UNLIKE A HUGE WATER FOWL.

SNOWY MOVES CAMP

CHAPTER 2

SNOWY did not wait for thanks. He again dived into the river and swam, hand over hand, until at last he reached his boat. He grasped its side and scrambled into it, causing it to rock dangerously.

One oar was missing. This he spied floating down the stream, about a hundred yards

ahead. Using his remaining oar as a paddle, working it first on one side and then on the other, Snowy went after the escaping oar and in a very little while caught it.

This saved, he turned and looked back at his camp. There was no sign of the boy nor of his mother. Eric had been hurried off for a change of clothes.

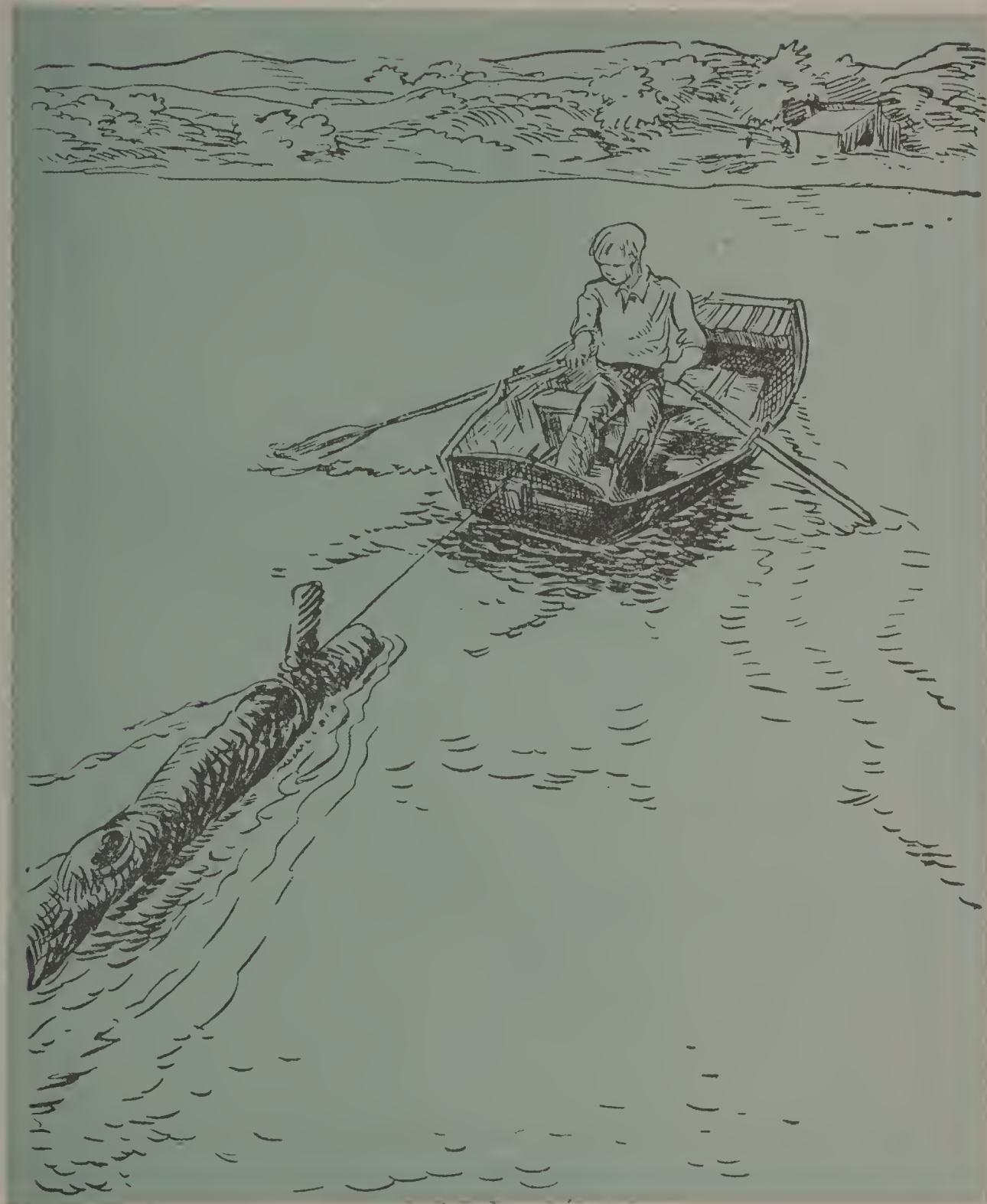
As Snowy rowed back he saw the log which the boy had tried to capture. He reached it, and, making it fast with a length of rope from the boat, he towed it slowly to the bank and rolled it up beside the others.

Toot! Toot! It was the shrill whistle of a river steamer coming down the river. With a glance at the pile of logs he had collected, Snowy jumped into his boat and rowed to the big flat-bottomed steamboat which looked not unlike a huge water fowl skimming the surface of the water.

He tied his boat to a handy rope and pulled himself on board the vessel and sought out the captain.

"I want to sell my logs," he said bluntly, at once getting to business.

"You do, eh?" The captain smiled as he



HE TOWED IT SLOWLY TO THE BANK.

looked at the boy's earnest face. “Why the hurry? I'm well stocked at present. Couldn't we let them wait until the return trip?”

Snowy shook his head. “I've something planned, Captain,” he said mysteriously. “I'd like you to take them now, if you would.”

“Very well, then,” said the captain.

When he had completed the deal with Snowy he handed him several silver coins and gave orders to have the logs picked up.

Snowy winked at a deckhand. He was pleased with the deal he had made. He began to whistle as the boat slowly pulled over to the bank to take on the logs.

“I'd like to be skipper of a steamer like this,” he mused, as he looked at the steamboat with its shinning brasswork and well-kept decks. “I will!” he breathed.

When the logs were loaded, Snowy swung himself over the side and dropped easily into his boat. Standing up, he pushed off, letting the boat rock in the backwash of the steamer's paddles. “Yes,” he told himself. “Some day I'll be captain of a boat like that!”

Sooner or later, Snowy knew that Eric and his mother would seek him. He made up his



"I WANT TO SELL MY LOGS," HE SAID BLUNTLY.

mind to get away from the spot without delay.

Beginning with his tent, he soon had the canvas off and rolled into a neat bundle, which he fitted into the prow of the boat. His few pots and pans followed, and then his blankets. In a very little time, except for the ashes of his fire, there was scarcely a mark to show where the camp had been.

He rowed straight for the middle of the stream and then turned his boat against the current. At the bend he looked back. A man, a woman, and a little boy were standing near the site of his late camp.

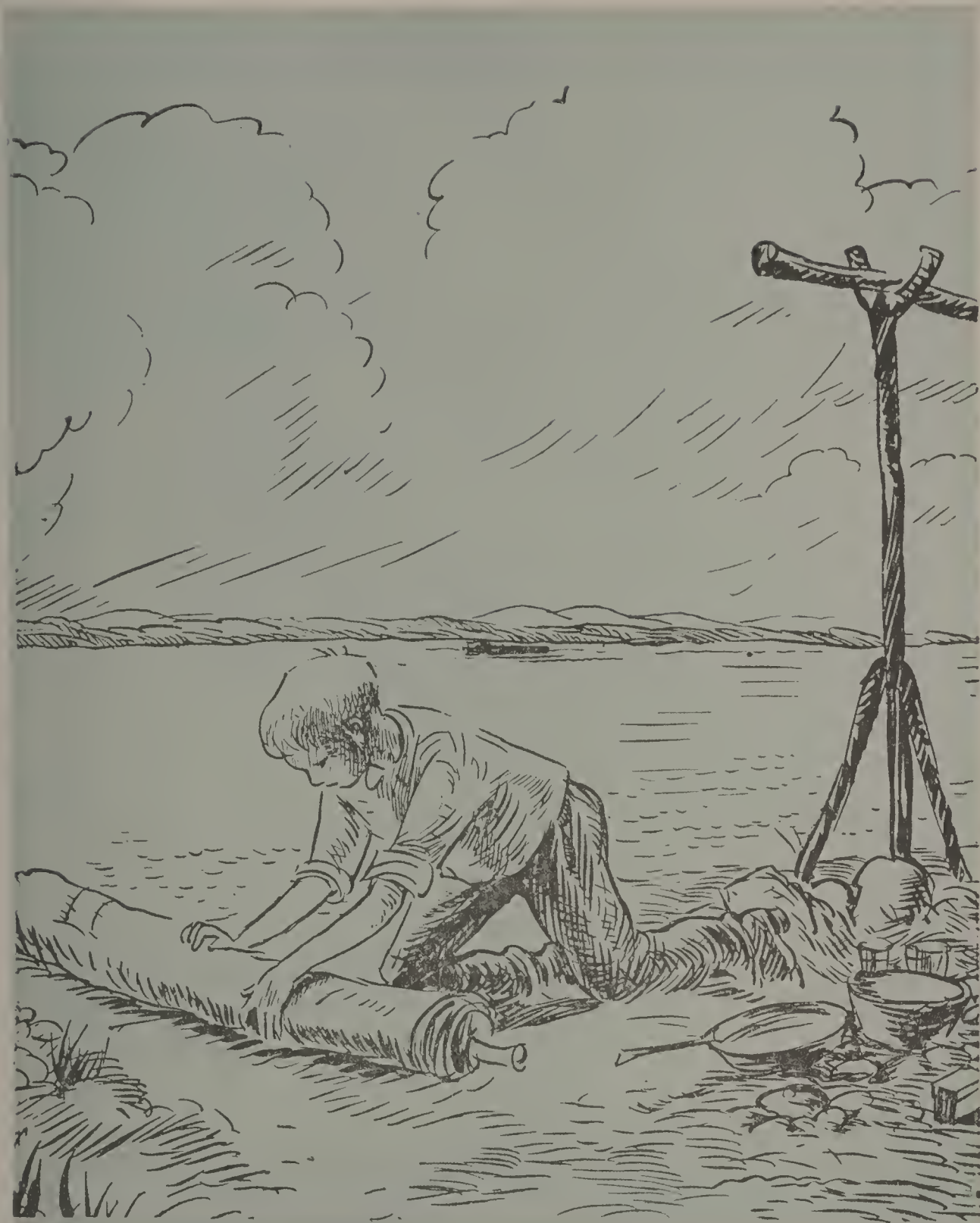
Snowy breathed a sigh of relief.

“Just in time!” he said.

Eric and his parents were searching for him. They were seeking Snowy, the river boy, to thank him for saving Eric’s life. Snowy for luck!

Snowy sighed. He had not wished to leave the place so soon. The spot was a good one for his little business. He came to it at the same time each season.

With strong pulls on his oars he caused the boat to shoot across to the opposite bank. Here grew a big orange tree whose ripe, juicy fruit



HE SOON HAD THE CANVAS ROLLED INTO A
NEAT BUNDLE.

hung down over the water, well within reach.

Snowy chose a dozen large oranges and stored them carefully in a little cupboard he had built under the seat of the boat. Then, taking up the oars, he rowed back to the bend in the stream, and again gazed at the place where he had camped.

Eric Wilson had found the heap of ashes. He had called his parents to the spot. Snowy saw them look up and down the river.

The river boy allowed the boat to drift into the shelter of an overhanging shrub on the bank. Here, well hidden from view, he watched.

At last Mr. and Mrs. Wilson and Eric moved off.

“Thank goodness, they’ve gone!” said Snowy aloud, “but I can’t go back there for awhile!”

Then, bending to the oars, he began to row up the stream.



SNOWY CHOSE A DOZEN LARGE ORANGES.



HIS CLOTHES WERE STRETCHED OUT ON A
SMALL LINE.

THE STRANDED BARGE

Chapter 3

IT WAS a glorious spring day. The river rippled merrily by. On one bank, standing high and dry, was an old barge. On the opposite side was Snowy's camp. A fire burned brightly. A wire tripod stood over the flames and, hanging on a hook, was a pot of meat and vegetables which Snowy was making into a stew for his dinner.

In front of the fire was Snowy. It was washing day, and most of his clothes, scrubbed clean and sweet, were stretched out on a small line tied between two dwarfed trees.

Few people passed that way, and the boy was not at all afraid of being caught napping. There was a streak of the wild man in him. He loved to remove most of his clothing and scamper around in the warmth of the sun.

He glanced along the stream to see that there were no pleasure or cargo boats coming up or

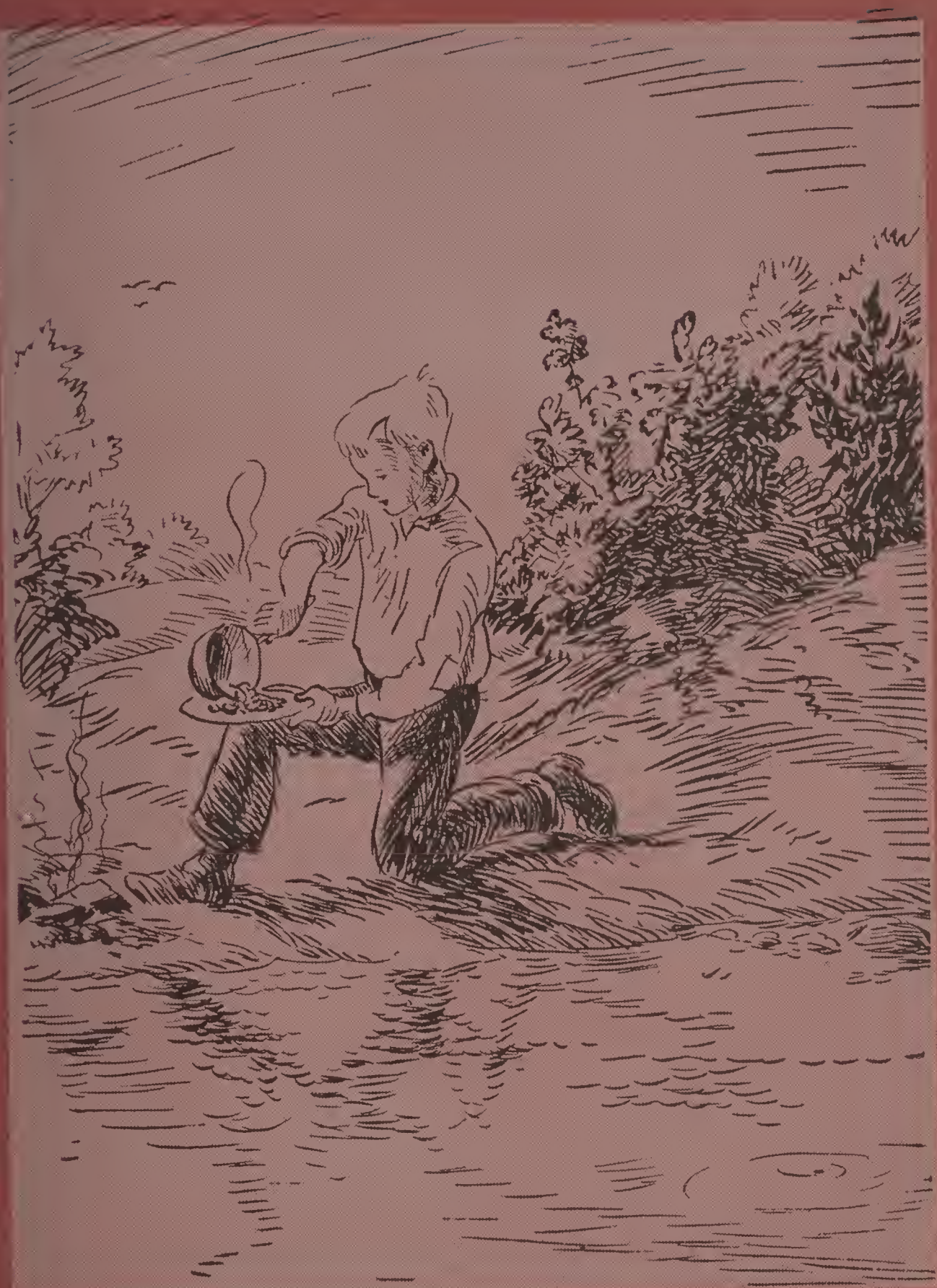
down; then, after lifting the lid of his pot and sniffing the savoury smell of the stew, he hopped into his boat and rowed to the opposite bank.

Snowy loved the sun. It made him feel very happy. As he pulled the oars, he burst into a merry song.

The nose of the boat bumped easily into the soft mud and would have rebounded into deep water had not the boy jumped out and held it by its painter. This he tied to a tree, putting in an extra knot to hold it firm.

He then walked along until he came to a young springy tree, which he bent over and secured with a piece of string he had brought with him. He made a slip knot and a loop. He then spread a line of fine raisins leading to the loop and tied some of them to the slip knot so that duck or other fowl following the trail of raisins would release the loop and cause the tree to spring back and catch the unwary bird in the loop.

He tested it, and the string tightly gripped his finger. After re-setting it and adding a few grains of wheat to the raisins in order to make the bait very tempting, he walked farther along



"THAT'S FINE!" HE SAID ALOUD.

to a spot where a willow tree let its leaves sweep the surface of the stream. This was a good spot for fishing, and baiting a line, Snowy cast it into the water.

He went back to the boat, and, releasing the rope that held it, he let it drift gently with the current. After a little of this he took an oar and rowed first one side and then the other until he reached his camp.

His first thought was for his dinner. He removed the pot in which the meat and vegetables were simmering and emptied the contents into a large tin plate.

“That’s fine!” he said aloud, winking at his own reflection thrown back at him from the river.

He washed out the pot and filled it with water from the river, and again hung it over the fire. From a corner of the boat he took a fork and spoon. He also found a slice or two of stale bread, which he broke into little pieces and added to the dish.

He sampled the stew and smacked his lips. He squatted on a log and, using his knees as a table, began his meal.

Soon the plate was empty; but Snowy’s ap-

petite was not satisfied. Dessert was still to come.

Laying aside the plate he went across to the pot which by this time was sending out steam and splashes of water, as if trying its best to put out the fire.

With a stick he lifted it from the blaze and, after pouring a little of the water over the greasy tin plate, he placed the pot on the ground while he tied a pinch of tea in the corner of a piece of cloth. This done, he dropped the little bag of tea into the boiling water.

While the tea was drawing, he got out a tin of condensed milk and a small jar of jam which he himself had made from fruit picked along the river banks. Snowy had made friends of all the fruitgrowers, and had been given permission to take what fruit he needed.

He cut a thin slice of bread from a loaf and spread it thickly with jam. From the pot he poured a little of the tea into a tin mug, into which he stirred a big spoonful of milk and the same quantity of sugar.

When the meal was over he washed up the few dishes and packed them away. By this

time his clothes were dry. He put them on. "Now," he laughed, "I'm ready for visitors!"

Some time later, Snowy again stepped into the boat and began to paddle slowly across to the other side of the river. This time he went straight for the old barge, which he regarded as part and parcel of his own life.

The barge was a mystery. As long as could be remembered, it had been stuck hard and fast in the mud. No one knew to whom it belonged, and no one cared.

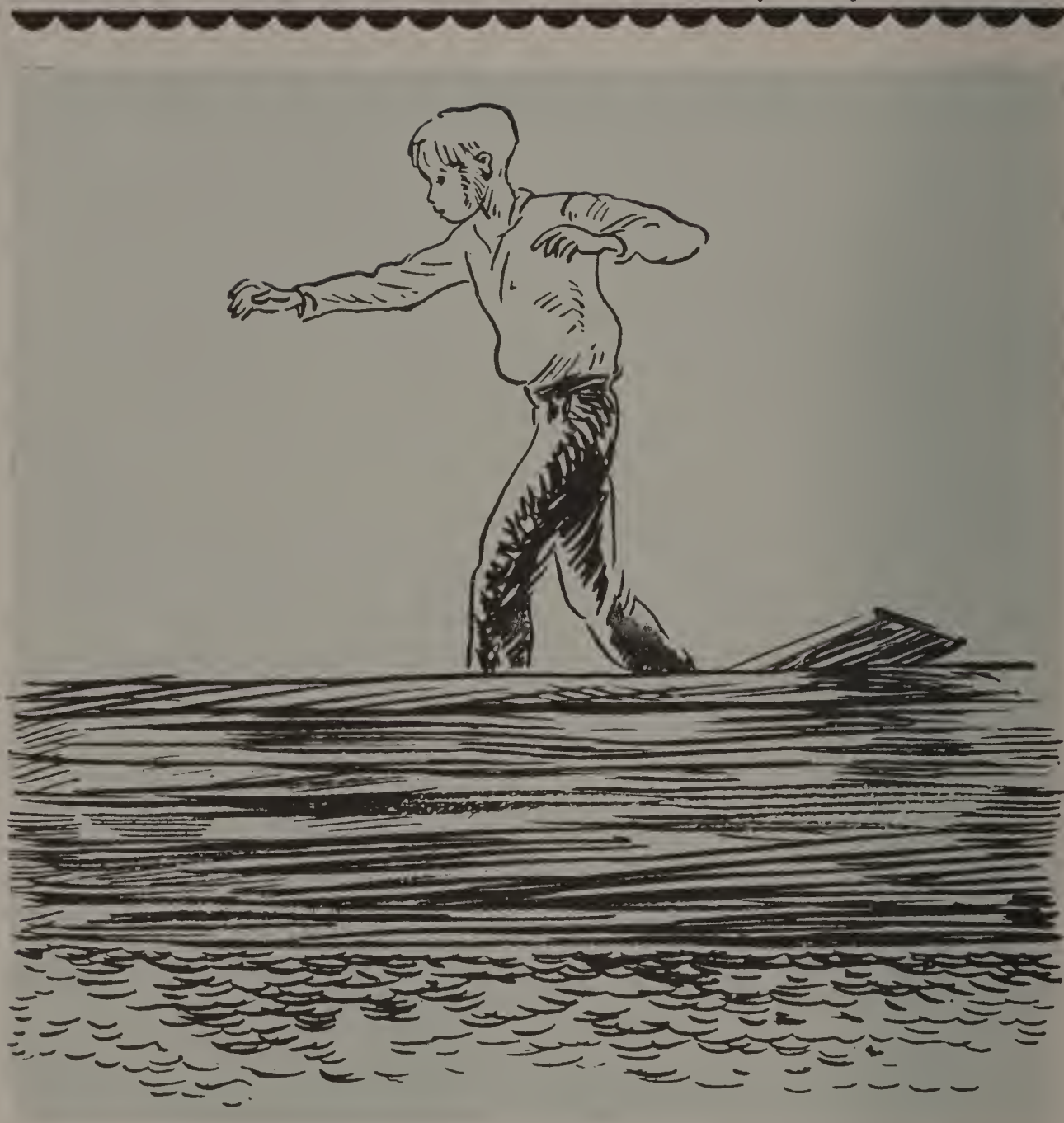
Years and years before, so it was said, when the river was higher than it had ever been in the memory of the oldest person there, the barge, quite empty, had floated down the stream. It had been caught by a snag and, the water suddenly dropping, it had been held firmly in the river mud.

Snowy made great use of the barge. He often spread his tent over it and used it as a camping site. This was in the wintertime when the weather was cold and frosty. He would never pass without giving it a call.

He looked round to see that there was no one about. He then climbed inside the old boat and danced on its timbers. He took



HE WENT STRAIGHT FOR THE OLD BARGE.



HE THEN CLIMBED INSIDE THE OLD BOAT.

something from his pocket and opened a cunning little door between two of the boards.

The barge had a double bottom into which, for some reason, a secret compartment had been built. This was hidden by a little trap-door fitted with a spring, and, though the



SNOWY LOOKED UP QUICKLY.

barge was very old, the little door still worked with a sharp snap.

Snowy had found the door by accident, and had made it his bank. Here, he felt, his little store of money was quite safe. Even should anyone visit the barge, it would have taken sharp eyes to find the secret hiding-place.

Snowy was saving up. There were many things he wanted before the winter drew on. His blankets were thin and worn, and he needed a new coat to shield him from the cold.

He opened the little door and took out a little bag of coins.

“Three dollars!” he counted, with a satisfied nod. “Good! That means a new coat.”

He had replaced the money and was shutting the door when he heard a foot step on the deck of the barge. He snapped the door closed and stood upon it, as a shadow fell across him.

Snowy looked up quickly and saw a man staring at him over the side of the boat.



"HELLO, SNOWY!"

ANCIENT

CHAPTER 4

WELL!" said Snowy sharply, ready, if need be, to do battle for his little store.

"Hello, Snowy!"

"Why, bless me, it's old Ancient." Snowy's face was all smiles. "I haven't seen you for a long time. How are you getting along?"

The old man shook his head. "I'm not too

good, lad, I sometimes feel as if I'm not long for this world."

"Don't say that. Buck up! Just look at the sun. Doesn't it make you feel good?" The boy scrambled on to the deck of the barge and took the old man's hands in his.

"Perhaps you're hungry," he suggested.

"Maybe!" was the reply. A look of cunning passed over the old man's face. "What were you doing in the old tub, lad?"

Snowy glanced suspiciously at the questioner. There was something in the query which he did not like.

"Just poking about," he answered vaguely.

"There's nothing much about the old barge, though, is there, Snowy?"

"I sometimes camp here. I was seeing if it was all right," was the boy's reply.

"There are stories told that it used to be an old treasure boat, in days gone by. It belonged to the Spaniards. It was washed up by a huge tidal wave."

Snowy thought of the little hiding-place and the treasure that lay in it.

"I've heard that story dozens of times," he said, "but I think it must be a fairy yarn. I've



"I WAS THINKING OF CAMPING IN THE OLD
BARGE," SAID ANCIENT.

never found any treasure here." He was a little suspicious of the man, and felt tempted to go back and remove the money. "But that is silly," he thought. "The old chap's all right."

The day was warm, yet Ancient shivered. Snowy felt sorry for the old man who like himself was an outcast with no one to care for him. He blamed himself for thinking evil of Ancient.

"You must have tea with me," he said with a smile. "And stay the night, too, if you like. I haven't much to offer you, but it's better than nothing. You'll be company for me too, Ancient. There are times when I'd give my little finger just to have someone to speak to."

"I was thinking of camping in the old barge," said Ancient, glancing back. "It makes a good shelter these times."

"Don't do that," said Snowy quickly. "There is plenty of room in my tent. It's weatherproof. You can have one of my blankets, too."

Anxiously Snowy awaited the other's reply. For a moment he thought that Ancient was going to refuse. In that case, he would

certainly return to the barge and remove his money. However, Ancient decided for the tent and they moved off together.

"You're a good lad, Snowy,—too good for this life," said the old man, looking at the boy trudging along by his side. "I was not always like this, and I know. There was a time when—"

"Tell me the story, please, as we go along. I haven't heard a story for ages."

They reached Snowy's boat. The old man seemed so feeble that the boy put his arm around him and helped him in.

"Come on," he pleaded, "tell me the story of your life. Before we cross the river."

"Not now, lad." Ancient looked hard at the water as it swirled about the nose of the boat. "Perhaps tonight, after tea," he added, as Snowy pushed off from the bank.

The river boy was not prepared for company, but he made the best of things. He fried a couple of thick slices of bread in some fat he had saved, and placed this beside the fire to keep warm while he brewed a steaming hot can of tea. Then there was the jam, with a nice, juicy orange to top off the lot.

The meal over, and the few dishes cleared away, the two drew up to the fire. As the night was inclined to be cold, Snowy brought in a double supply of wood.

Ancient sucked at an empty pipe and stretched himself before the fire. Snowy curled himself up only a few feet away.

"Now, spin that yarn, please!" he urged.



SNOWY BROUGHT IN A DOUBLE SUPPLY OF WOOD.



"ONCE UPON A TIME I WORKED IN A BANK."

THE OLD, OLD STORY

CHAPTER 5

ANCIENT began: "Snowy, lad, I hardly like to tell you. I know you'll think badly of me. I'm not a good man, my boy, and after hearing what I have to say you may despise me. But here goes.

"Once upon a time I worked in a bank. I

was older than you are, lad, but not so tall. I thought a lot of myself in those days, I can tell you, and for a time I worked hard to please my employers.

“They saw how eager I was to get on,” he went on after a pause, “and helped me all they could. I soon found myself in a high position—one of trust. Snowy, I had to handle more money in one day than many people see in all their lives—bags so full of coins, lad, that you couldn’t lift them.”

“Yes, Ancient?” urged Snowy as the man stopped. “And you had charge of all that money, eh?”

Ancient leaned forward, his face cupped in his hands. His eyes were fixed on the glowing embers.

“Yes, lad,” he said. “For a time it was all right. I did everything I should and was very careful. My mother was very pleased with the way I was getting on, and—”

“I wish I had a mother, Ancient,” said Snowy sadly. “I had one once, you know, just like other boys. But she is dead, and my father is too. I’m the only one left,” he sighed.

“Yes, I know, lad. Well, to get on with the

story. I got into bad company. It's the same old story. To pay off my debts I helped myself to some of the bank's money—just a little, Snowy, and—”

“You—you stole it, Ancient? You took something that wasn't yours?” Snowy was horrified.

“Yes, lad, I did. But I meant to put it back. Truly, I did, I wanted it for only a few days. But I didn't put it back. Instead, I took more. Then one day I found a key. I knew it well. It was one of the keys to the safe, and belonged to the manager. There were two keys needed to open the safe.

“I looked round quickly. No one had seen me pick it up, so I slipped the key into my pocket and said nothing. A wild idea came to me. I made up my mind to come back that night and steal a lot more of the bank's money.

“And, Snowy, I did. I knew just how to get into the building without being seen. I need not tell you how I schemed to get the other key. I got it, however, and soon had the safe open. I was filling a bag I had brought along with coins when I heard a noise.”

Snowy never moved. To him it was not a pretty story, and he was sorry the old man had told him.

“I looked up,” Ancient continued. “There, with a candle in his hand, stood the manager. To save myself I hit him on the head with the bag of money. He dropped to the floor and I ran away. But they caught me, lad, and brought me up before the court.

“The manager was badly injured and had to stay in bed for a long time. I was tried and found guilty . . . Jail is a terrible place, Snowy. It broke my poor mother’s heart, and she died soon after I was sent to prison. There you are, Snowy, you know the story.”

“I’m sorry for you, Ancient,” said the boy quietly. “You shouldn’t have taken what belonged to others, though. It was wrong. Everybody knows that.”

“Well, I’m suffering enough for it,” said the man bitterly. “Anyway, that’s the yarn. I think I shall go to bed now, if you don’t mind.”

After the old man had fallen asleep by the fire, Snowy gently covered him with both blankets.



"THERE, WITH A CANDLE IN HIS HAND, STOOD
THE MANAGER.



SNOWY GENTLY COVERED HIM WITH
BOTH BLANKETS.

"Poor old Ancient!" he said. "I'm very, very sorry for him. But he shouldn't have taken the money."

His thoughts went to his own secret hoard, hidden in the old barge.

He glanced at the old man, who was sleeping peacefully. "I'll get it in the morning," he resolved. "I suppose it's all right, but it is just as well to be sure."



"ANCIENT SHOULD HAVE WAITED
FOR BREAKFAST."

ERIC AGAIN

CHAPTER 6

THE first beam of light was barely visible in the eastern sky before Snowy was awake. He believed in the maxim, "Early to bed, early to rise." He loved to be out at the first streak of dawn, to listen to the singing of

the birds of the bush as they greeted the new day.

For a moment or two he had forgotten all about his visitor of the previous night. He stretched out his arms and yawned. He felt cold and stiff. Then he remembered. He had given his blankets to Ancient.

“Wake up,” he cried, turning to where he had left the old man.

There was no reply.

“Why, he has gone!” Snowy was surprised. “Fancy Ancient beating me like that! Perhaps he has the fire going.”

But this was not so. The remains of the fire were still covered with the ashes which Snowy had heaped on the glowing charcoal the night before.

“That’s strange,” he said. “Ancient should have waited for breakfast.”

Snowy recalled the story the old man had told him. “Poor old Ancient!” he murmured. “He has had a hard life of it.”

Snowy’s next thought was for the trap he had set and the line he had cast on the previous day. “I wonder if I’ve caught anything! A tender young duck would go well for dinner.”

He hurried out. "Now, who has taken my boat?" he cried. "That's a nice trick to play on a chap."

He felt concerned over the loss of his boat. He shook his head, his long, fair hair waving in the wind. Though his little craft was not of much value it meant a lot to him. He shaded his eyes and looked across the stream.

"Why, there it is, tied up!" he said aloud.

At once he plunged into the ice-cold water and began to swim across. Half way over, he held his breath and rested.

"I wonder if old Ancient took the boat!" he thought. "And why?"

Striking out again he soon reached the other side. Yes, there was his boat. It was fastened to a stump and both oars were in it.

Of Ancient there was not a sign. Snowy untied the boat and rowed back towards the old barge.

"It does look a little bit like an old-time ship," he said. "I wonder if at one time it was sailed by the Spaniards or the Dutch in search of new lands? Is that story of its being an old-time treasure boat true? Anyway, how did it drift up the river against the current?"



AT ONCE HE PLUNGED INTO THE ICE-COLD WATER

Perhaps it was brought up by the pirates!"

He shook his head. He well knew that the river had once flowed over a different course. The old course of the stream had been pointed out to him by some Indians he had made friends with; but he could not see how a boat as big as the barge could have come up so many miles from the sea.

He reached the barge and scrambled over its side. Hurrying to the little hiding-place, he pressed the hidden spring, causing the door to fly open.

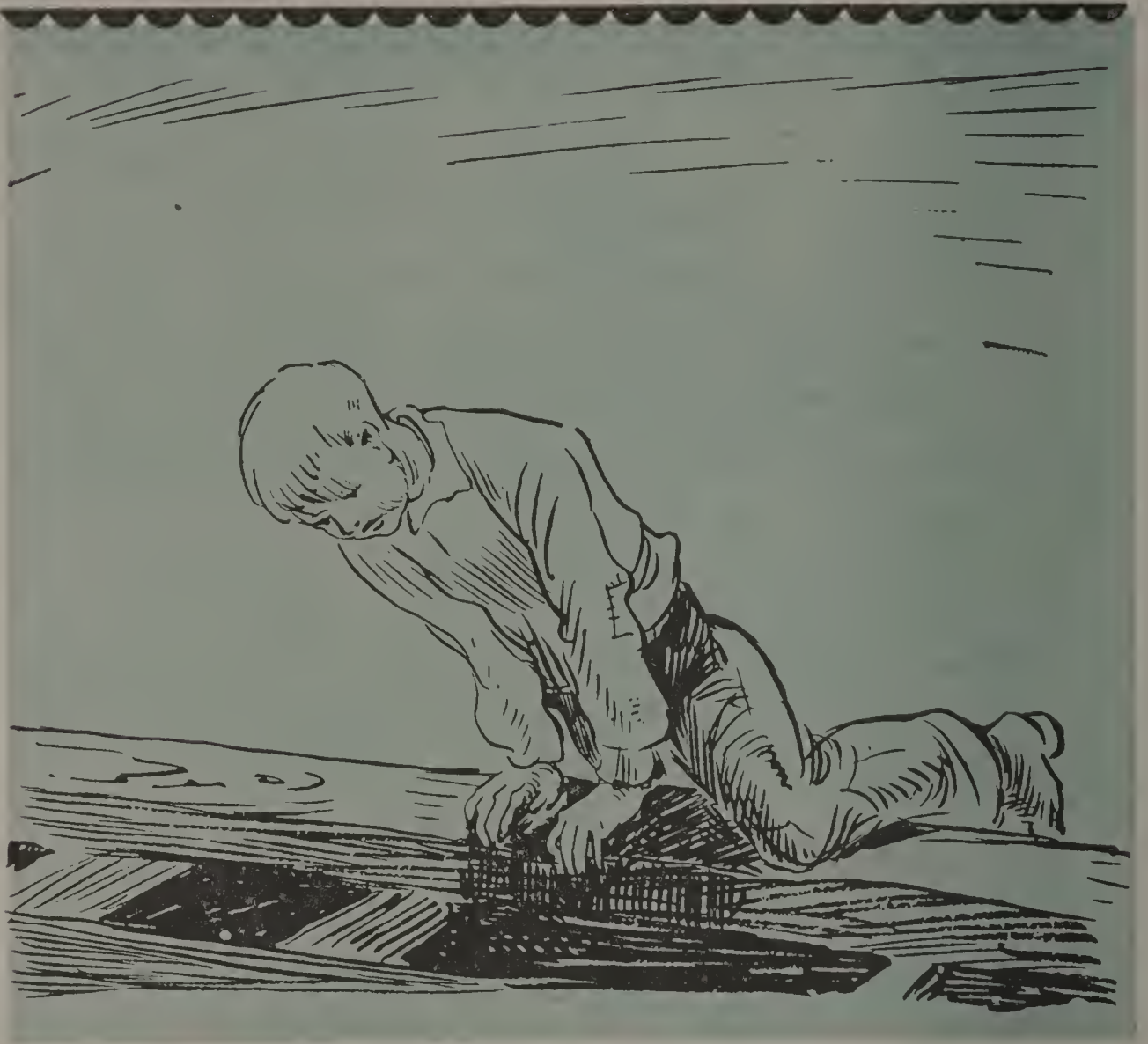
The money was not there!

His thoughts at once went to the story told him by Ancient the night before.

"That's it!" he cried. "Ancient saw me here yesterday, and he came out early and took the money. Once a thief, always a thief!"

The loss of the money meant a lot to Snowy, who knew he would have to go without the things he had so wished to buy. The badly needed coat would have to remain in the shop.

"Oh, well!" he said, swallowing the lump that came into his throat, "perhaps Ancient needed it more than I did."



HE SCRAMBLED OVER ITS SIDE.

With a last long glance at the place which for many a day had been his bank, he slowly crawled to the deck of the barge. He stood up and looked about him.

Suddenly he jumped to the ground and started to run. A few yards ahead was the trap he had set. In it was caught a fine, fat, young duck.

Snowy lost no time in getting the duck, and



"THIS IS MY LUCKY MORNING!"

then went on to find that there was a fish on his line.

“Hurrah!” he cried. “This is my lucky morning. Snowy for luck! I wish old Ancient were here to share this with me. Why didn’t he ask me for the money, if he wanted it?”

The duck, nicely roasted, tasted good, but it was too much for one meal. The thick, white flesh of the fish, too, was delicious. What was left over, Snowy carefully packed away in the boat.

He had a place in his boat for everything, and he had so worked out things that in a very little time he had the tent down and all his other things packed away.

In midstream he paused, and then turned his boat with the current. Lying full length, one hand on the string of the rudder to keep it straight, the boy drifted along easily.

The warm sun played over him. It was glorious. He felt as if he could lie there and drift along forever.

He turned on his side, and, leaning over, let one of his hands play in the cool water. Cupping his hand, he brought some of the water to his mouth.

“Fine!” he thought.

For hours he drifted along. “Another mile,” he said, glancing at the bank, “and I shall be round the bend.”

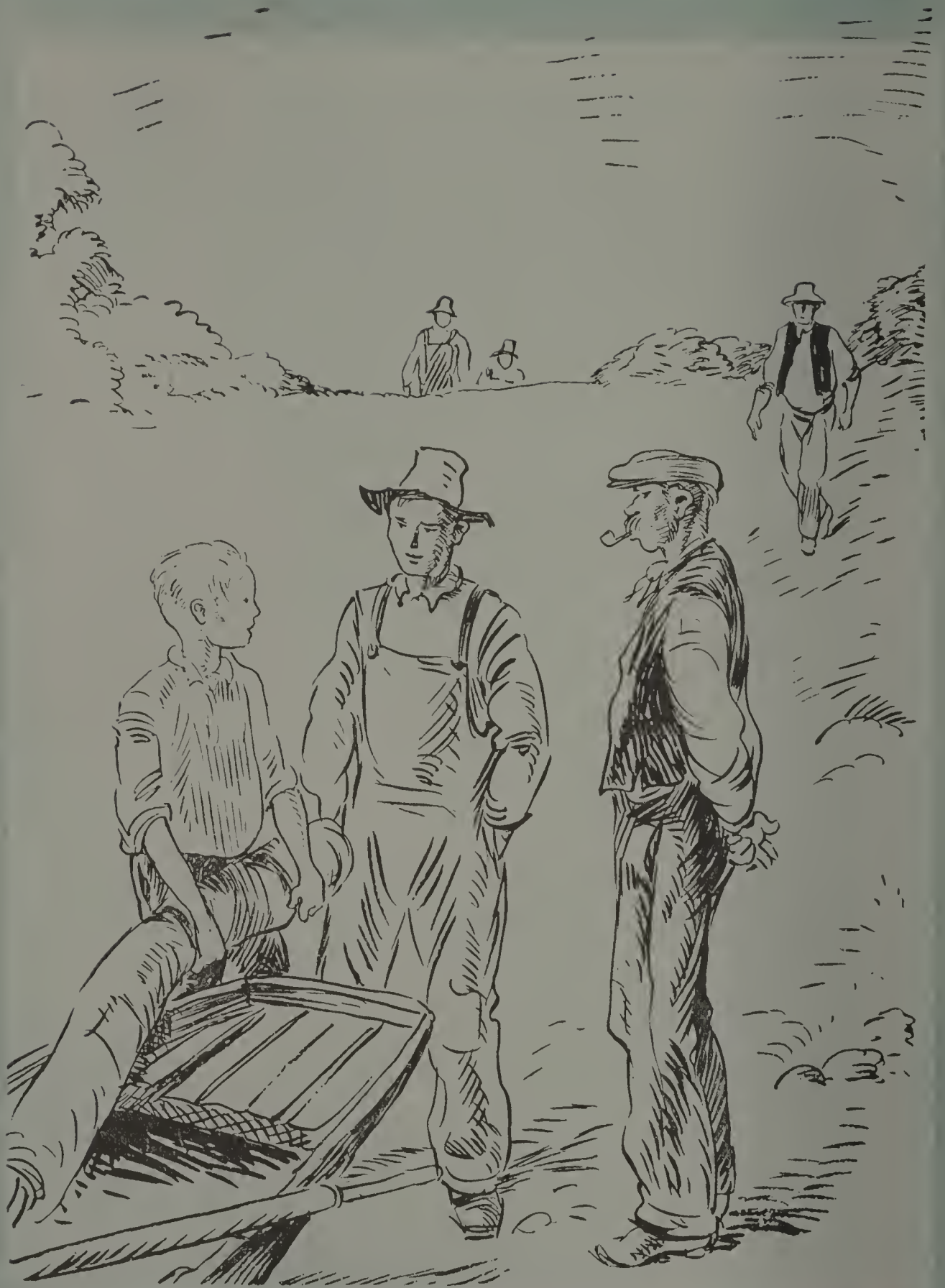
He was making for his old camp which he had left after having rescued Eric Wilson from the river. He knew that he would find other river people there as it was a favorite camping place for them.

“It ought to be safe enough now,” said Snowy. He felt sure that Eric’s parents would not be there now to embarrass him with their thanks for his rescue. “And it’s a great spot for business,” he added to himself.

At last he roused himself. Before him was the bend in the stream—almost an elbow—beyond which was the place where he intended to camp.

He put the oars in the locks and dipped them into the water. He bent forward once, and the little boat shot ahead and rounded the turn. A few minutes later he was unloading his boat.

His arrival was soon known to the camp of river people, and he was greeted on all sides as most of these river people were his friends.



HIS ARRIVAL WAS SOON KNOWN.

“Snowy for luck!” shouted someone.

Snowy nodded his head. “Caught a big fish this morning,” he remarked casually, nodding toward the boat where the fish and duck lay side by side.

“Good for you, boy,” said someone, patting him on the back.

“Easy on the back-slapping, lad,” said Snowy. “My back is a bit sunburnt.”

He worked in silence for a while, not heeding the watching crowd.

“I say,” he called to one, “have you seen Ancient? He wasn’t looking well when I last saw him. He’s getting too old for the river, I think.”

No one had seen the old man.

“I suppose he’ll turn up again some day,” the boy remarked, as he tied the last rope of his tent. “There, that’s done! I shall be as snug as a prince. Now for tea.”

He had scarcely gone inside his tent when he heard a cry. “It’s Snowy! It’s Snowy!”

Snowy started back.

“Bother it!” he muttered. He hurried out and began to take down his tent, but it was too late.



"BOTHER IT!" HE MUTTERED.

"If it isn't Eric!" he said, seeing that there was no escape.

He grabbed the boy. "Look here!" he said. "Don't tell your mother or father that I am—"

But Eric had wriggled free and had rushed outside.

"Father, Mother, quick! Here's Snowy. Snowy for luck!"

THE RIVER FOR ME

CHAPTER 7

HERE'S Snowy!" said Eric, urging his parents forward. "Quick, here he is!"

There was only one way for Snowy to get away and he took it, disappearing just as the others came up.

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Wilson, startled as she saw the boy dive into the stream. "He has gone. He'll be drowned."

Eric laughed. "Don't worry, Mother. Snowy is all right. He's like a fish in the water."

Despite Eric's tone, however, Mrs. Wilson breathed more freely when, some time later, the surface of the water was broken by the fair head of the river boy.

"Come here, sonny!" called Eric's father, kindly. "I want to speak to you."

Snowy treaded water for a moment, as if wondering what he had better do.

"All right," he shouted back, and at once began to splash slowly towards the bank.

Dripping wet, he came out of the water, Mr. Wilson grasped his hand and wrung it warmly. "Boy," he said, "a few days ago you did me a service which I shall never be able to repay."

"Don't, please, Mister," said Snowy, shaking his head. "It was nothing."

There was no rudeness in his voice.

Eric's mother drew Snowy to her. He was still wet, but she did not mind. Round his neck went her arms, and she kissed him, and kissed him again.

"We want you to come and live with us," she said.

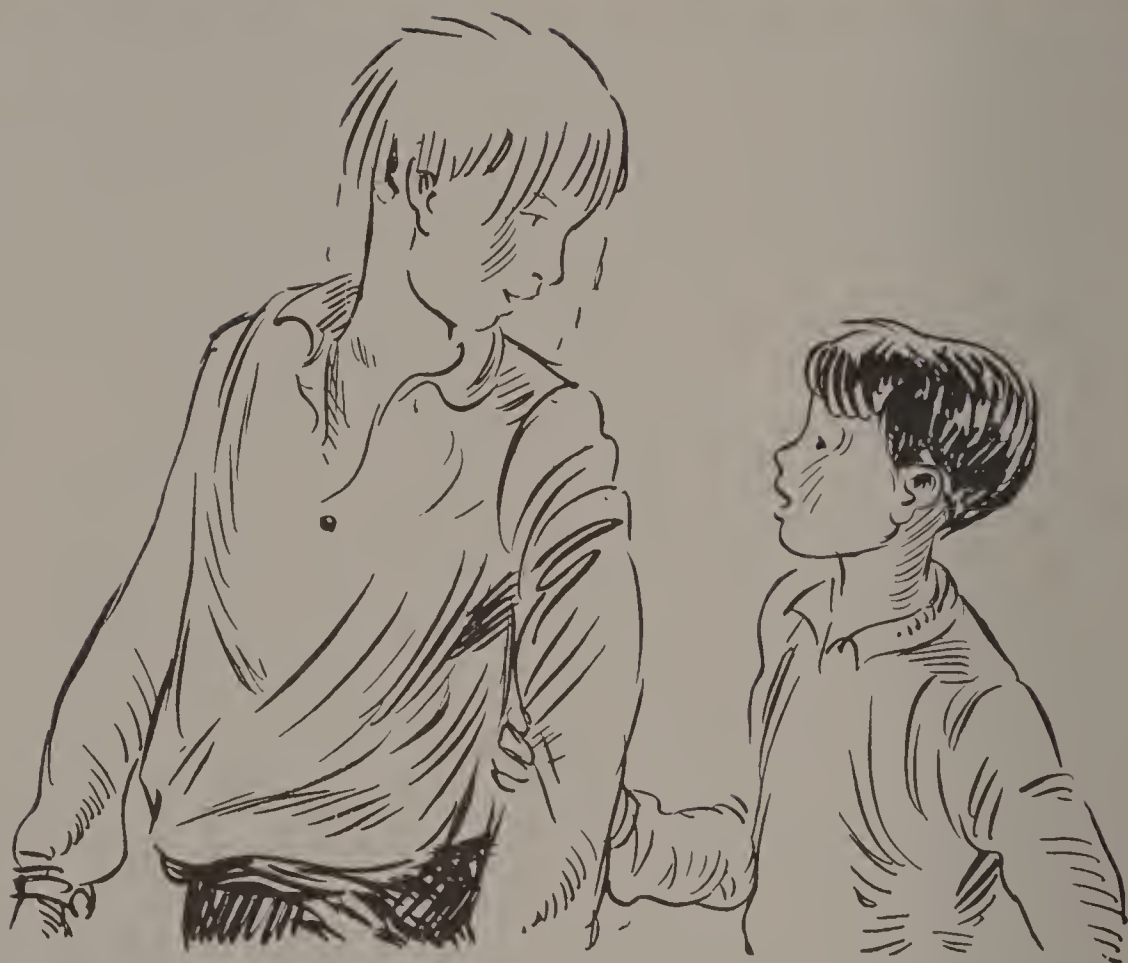
Eric danced with glee. "Yes, do, Snowy," he urged. "Come on. You can be my big brother, and we'll have great times together. You can teach me to swim, and fish and—"

Snowy looked from one to another. It felt so nice to have arms round his neck and to know that there was someone who really cared for him.

"I didn't do anything at all!" he protested. "He was game to venture in. I only pulled him out. That was all."



MR. WILSON GRASPED HIS HAND AND WRUNG
IT WARMLY.



"YOU COULD TEACH ME LOTS OF THINGS, SNOWY."

Mr. Wilson placed his hand on the lad's shoulder and looked into his eyes.

"I wish you would let us do something for you!" he said. "Wouldn't you like to live with us?"

"And sleep on a real bed, and learn to read and write," added Eric, who thought that perhaps the best side of the picture was not being presented. "You could teach me lots of things, Snowy."

"I should arrange for you to learn a trade, and later I would set you up in business," Mr. Wilson continued.

Snowy looked down at the ground; with his bare toes he began to trace little drawings in the soft mud. Mrs. Wilson's arms were still round his neck. It was great! They were treating him—Snowy, the river boy—as one of themselves—as an equal. They wished to do something for him, to help him.

To him, it was like a dream. Why should these people wish to do so much for him, just because he had pulled their little boy out of the river? It had been quite easy for him; had it been a log, now, he felt he might have had something to talk about.

Poor Snowy! Poor homeless boy! He had been so used to battling for himself that when the hand of love was held out to him he failed to understand what it meant.

Eric, seeing him hesitate, caught one of the boy's hands in his and squeezed it fondly.

"I love you, Snowy," he said pleadingly. "We all love you!"

Snowy looked up and smiled. "Thank you," he said quietly.

He drew himself from them and walked up and down the river bank. He was not prepared for such an offer. On the other hand there was what he longed for—a comfortable home, a good education, and possibly a position in life which would be the envy of many. On the other hand there was the river.

At last he came back to the little group which stood waiting for his reply.

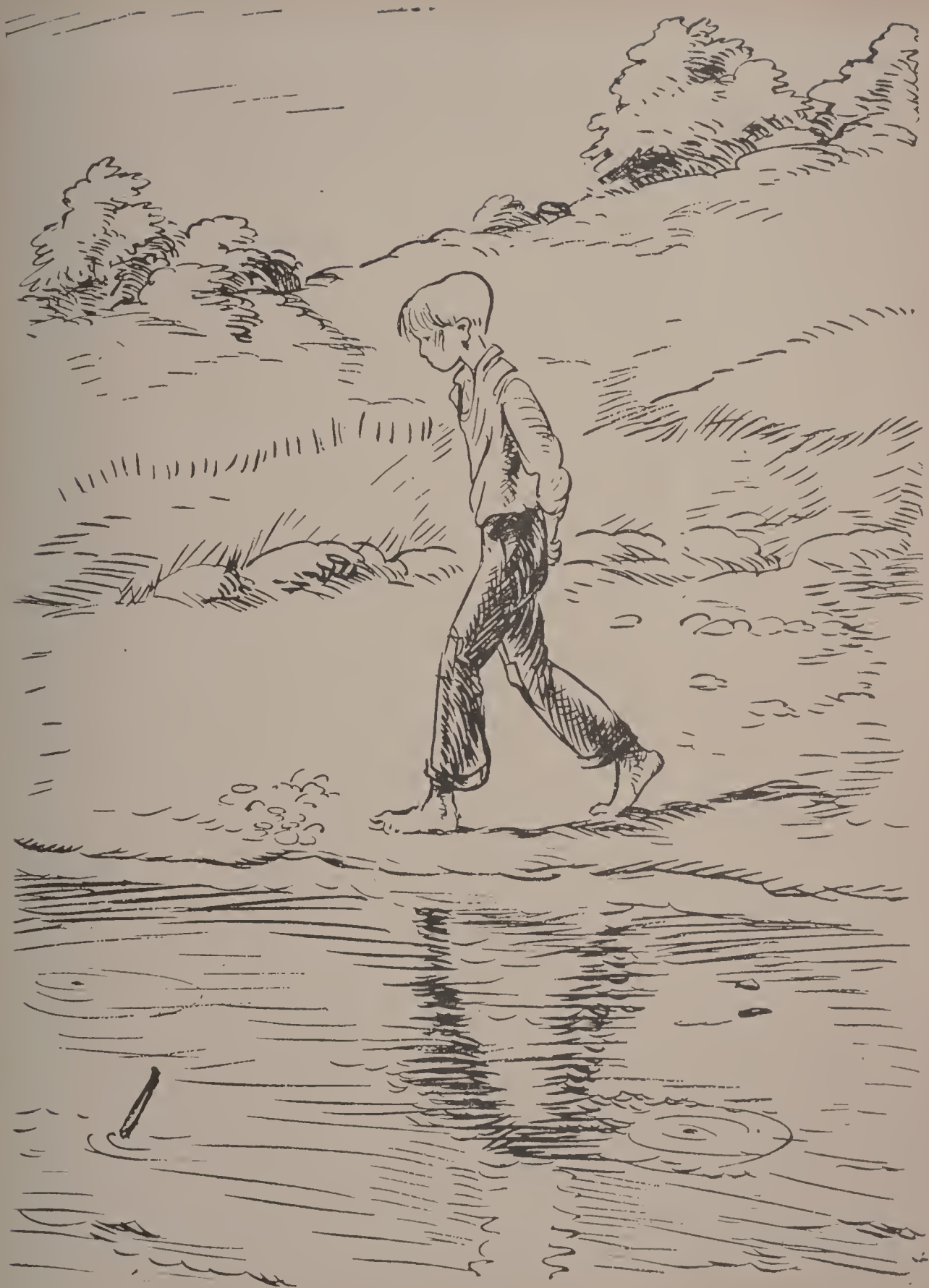
“I’m glad I was able to fish out the little chap for you,” he said. “And I thank you for what you have offered me. Perhaps I am wrong.” He stopped and sighed. “But,” he went on, looking Eric’s father straight in the face, “if it’s all the same to you, sir, the river’ll do for me.”

“I’m sorry that you won’t let us do something for you, lad. But it is not for me to force you. Are you sure there is no way in which I can help you?”

Snowy shook his head. “I have everything I want, thank you.”

“Lucky boy,” remarked Mr. Wilson, with a smile. “I’m afraid there are not many such as you in the world.”

He produced a card-case and handed the



HE WAS NOT PREPARED FOR SUCH AN OFFER.



HE HANDED THE BOY HIS CARD.

boy his card. "Here is my address; if you should think better of it at any time, you must let me know at once."

Without a glance at it Snowy dropped the card into the pocket of his trousers.

"Very well, sir." There was a lump in his throat as he spoke. "Goodbye, and thank you."

He turned quickly away. For the first time since he was a little lad there were tears in his eyes.



"I WISH I COULD DO SOMETHING,"
MURMURED SNOWY.

ANCIENT AGAIN

CHAPTER 8

SNOWY did not enjoy his meal that evening. He felt that, in refusing the help that had been offered him, he had lost a great deal.

Until far into the night he pondered the question, and then fell asleep to dream that he

was a great man living in a big house like a palace.

For once the morning was well advanced before Snowy awoke. From outside came the merry chirp, chirp of a honeyeater, together with the musical call of a larger bird.

“I must have overslept,” thought the boy, as he rubbed the sleep from his eyes, and squared his shoulders. “This won’t do.” He jumped up and cut a slice of bread from a loaf and ate it dry.

“I’ll have to leave here,” he muttered, as he looked around. “I shall go back to the old barge and stay there—for a while, at any rate.”

He lost no time in packing up and soon was pulling his heavily-laden boat against the strong current of the river.

After several hours’ hard rowing, he stopped and rested. Everything seemed to be out of gear. Even the singing of the bush birds, which hitherto had been his constant delight, failed to move him. He felt weary and tired.

“There must be something the matter,” he said aloud. “I shouldn’t like to get sick.”

In a little while he again set out and after



THERE, LYING FLAT ON THE BOTTOM,
WAS ANCIENT.

hard rowing he reached the barge late in the afternoon. As he drew up to the barge he heard a low moan. Snowy looked around, but as there was no one in sight, began to grow alarmed. “I’m beginning to hear things!” he muttered.

Just then he heard another moan.

Snowy stepped out, tied his boat to a stump, and ran toward the barge. He pulled himself up to the smooth, water-washed deck and looked inside. There lying flat on the bottom, was Ancient.

“Hello!” greeted Snowy, as he jumped in. Quietly lifting the head of the old man he pillowed it on his lap. “What’s wrong with you?” he asked.

“Snowy, lad,” said Ancient feebly. “I’m very sick.”

“That’s bad news. Just wait a bit and I’ll get you something to eat. You look hungry.

Away ran the boy to the boat. With some dry twigs and pieces of wood he soon had a fire going. He warmed up what was left of some broth he had saved from a previous meal and brought it to the old man.

“Drink this,” he commanded, as he brought back the steaming liquid.

Ancient tried to rise, but he was too weak. Snowy placed the broth on the bottom of the barge and gently lifted the old man into a sitting position; then, taking the spoon, he fed him as he would a baby.

After Ancient had taken all the broth, Snowy got some water from the river and washed the old man's face and hands.

"My word, Ancient, your skin is hot," he said.

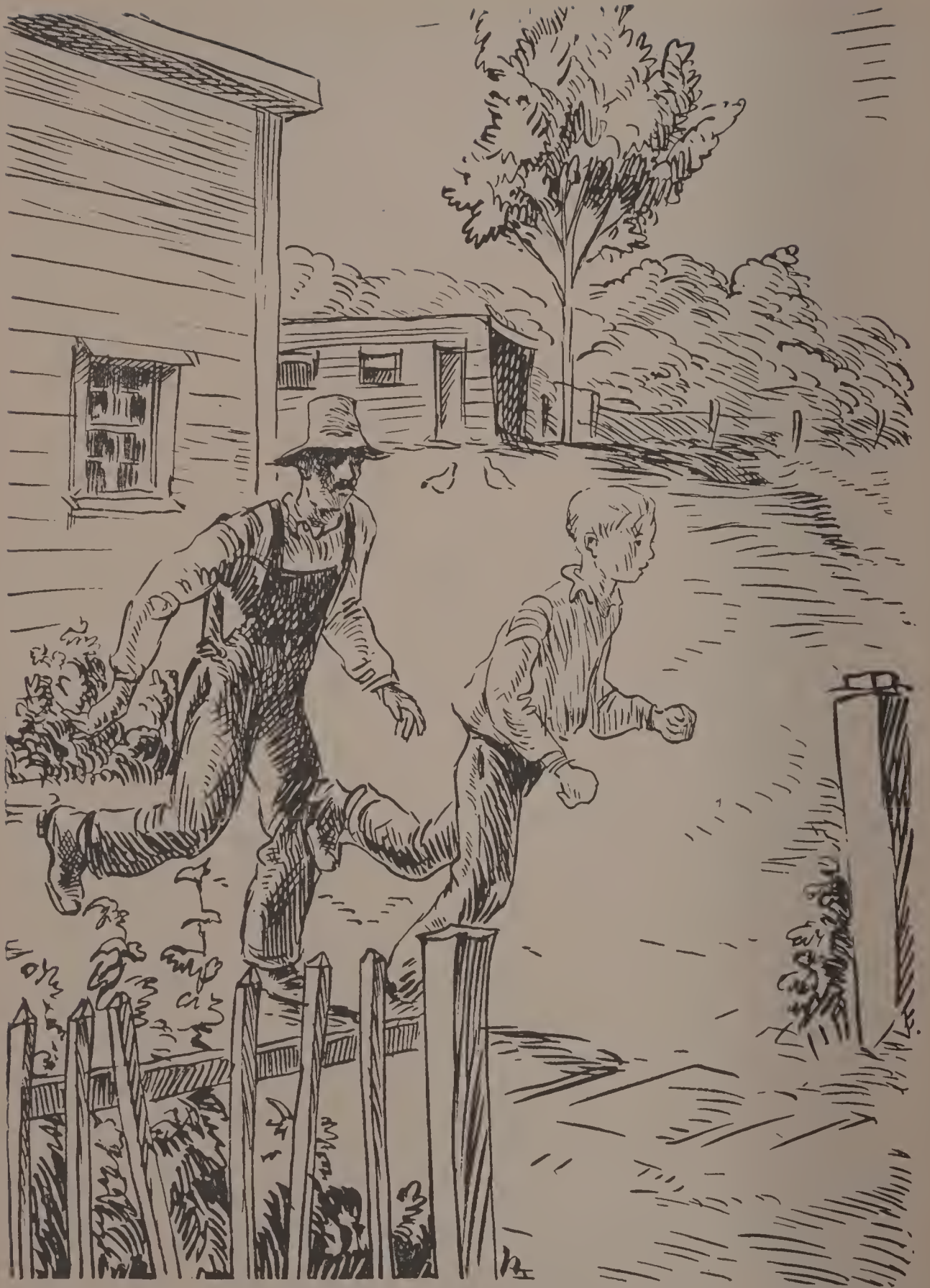
"Yes, lad, the fever has got me this time, I'm afraid. I don't think I shall pull through. Snowy, I have been a bad man all my life."

The old man really seemed quite ill and Snowy was alarmed.

"I wish I could do something," murmured Snowy. "What could I do?"

He thought for a while. "I know," he almost shouted. "I'll go for help. Mr. Smith, the farmer, lives only a few miles from here. I'll bring him along."

He tiptoed off to his boat and began to unpack. He piled everything in a heap on the bank; then, with a sweep of the oars, he pushed off. In less than an hour he had reached the farmer's house. He ran up the pathway and knocked loudly at the door.



HE HURRIED TO THE ROWBOAT AFTER THE BOY.

"Come quickly and help Ancient, Mr. Smith," he urged breathlessly. "He's very sick."

The farmer knew Snowy, he also knew Ancient, so waiting only to explain things to his wife, he hurried to the rowboat after the boy. Each took an oar and they soon completed the return journey.

"Snowy!" called the old man faintly. "Snowy, don't leave me."

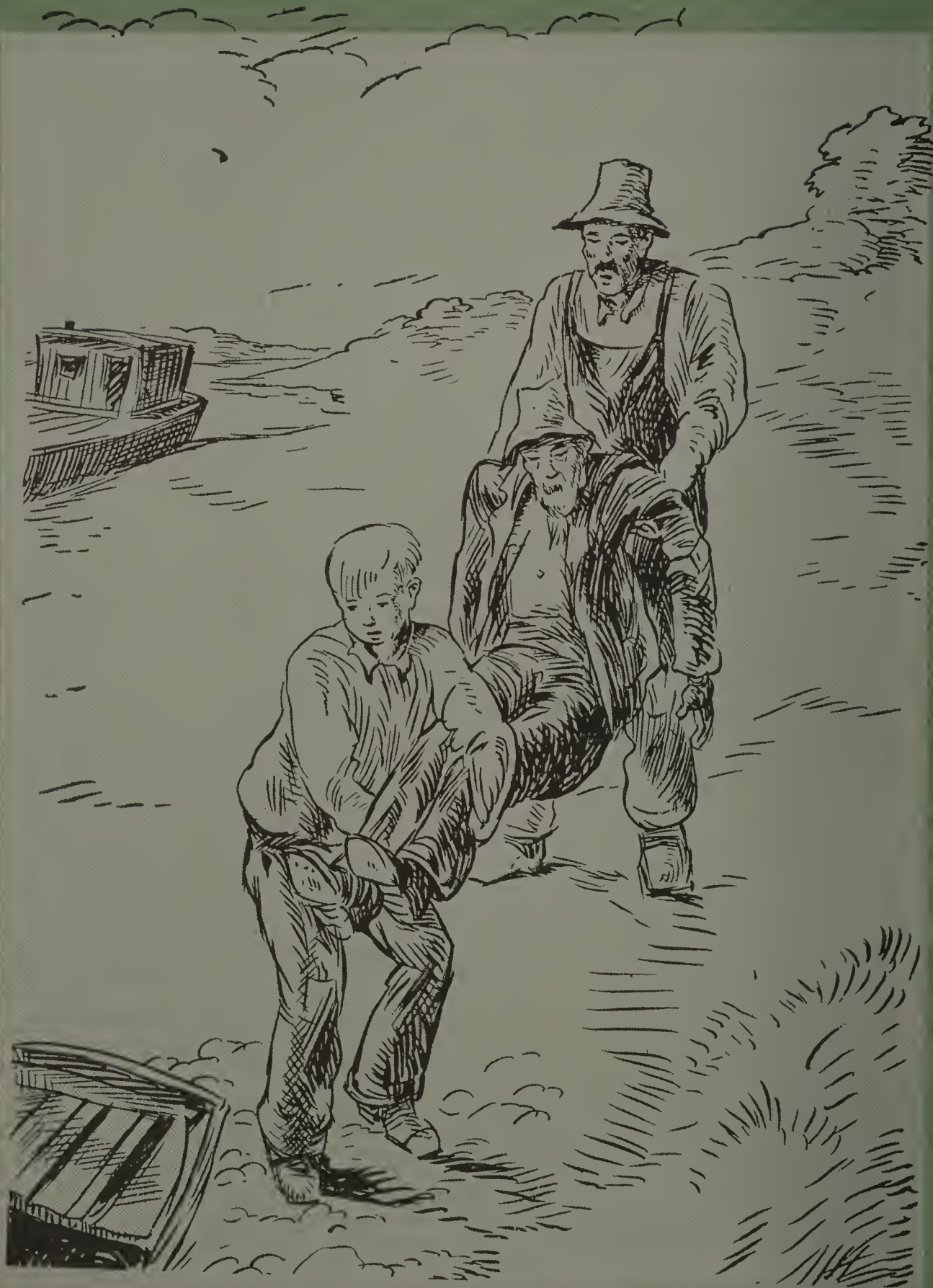
Both the boy and Mr. Smith hurried forward. "Here's someone come to help you, old 'un," Snowy explained, trying to be cheerful. "You'll soon be all right now."

"Snowy!" called the old man faintly. weak. "It was I who stole your money. I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?"

"Yes, Ancient, of course! What's mine is yours, you know," said Snowy. "Aren't we partners? Share and share alike, and all that. There isn't anything to forgive. You just brace up and get better."

The old man took Snowy's hand in his and closed his eyes.

Together Mr. Smith and Snowy carried the sick man to the boat.



TOGETHER THEY CARRIED ANCIENT TO THE BOAT.

“He’ll pull through,” said Mr. Smith. “I shall get a doctor for him.”

Snowy helped to row the boat to Mr. Smith’s place and to carry the old man up to the house. He then returned to where he had left his belongings. This time his stay at the barge was short. Everything seemed to have changed. Something seemed to draw him back to his old camping-ground. He felt sick at heart, so, after repacking his things in the boat, he got in and just let it drift with the current.

The tears would come as he thought of the lonely old man who was so sick. He had known him for a long time. Like himself, Ancient had no other home but the river.

Snowy recalled the story the man had told him, the story of his early life, and how he had failed. He had had a chance to make good in life, and he had abused it. Snowy, too, had had a chance, and he had cast it aside! What would be the end of him?

As the boat floated slowly down the river, Snowy’s mind was busy. He was fighting a great battle, one which few boys of his age are called upon to fight. At last Snowy made his decision.



HE SPLASHED ABOUT FOR A TIME.

"I'll do it!" he cried aloud.

After a bit of searching, he found the card which Mr. Wilson had given him and slowly spelled out the address.

"Why," he cried excitedly, "It's that new house along the river. I'll be there in a few minutes!"

Now that his decision was made Snowy was happy; he sang as he plied his shoulders to the oars:

“On the Mississippi, dear old Mississippi,
That’s where I was born.”

He steered the boat toward the right bank of the stream and, after making sure that no one was about, he stripped off his few clothes and dived into the cool water where he splashed about for a time. Then after drying himself with the remains of an old towel, he put on his clothes, and, with the aid of an almost toothless comb, he succeeded in coaxing his hair into some order.

His face was beaming, his fight with himself was over. Snowy meant to accept Mr. Wilson’s offer. He had had enough of a lonely life, now he was sure that he wanted friends—and love.

A little later, while he was tying up his boat before a large stone house, he heard a well-known voice.

“It’s Snowy!”

Eric Wilson had caught sight of his hero. “Hurrah! He has come! I knew he would. Good old Snowy! Snowy for luck!”



"WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE HAPPY HERE."

SNOWY'S NEW LIFE

CHAPTER 9

IT'S grand to have you with us, Snowy," said Eric as he gazed searchingly into the face of the boy who faced him. "You're not sorry you came, are you?" he asked, anxiously. "We are going to have great times together."

"I am—a little," Snowy admitted as his eyes went to the river. It had been a big wrench to leave the stream he loved but smiled and said, "I'll soon get over it, I know I will."

Eric lost little time in taking his friend inside. "Father! Mother!" he cried. "Here's Snowy. He is going to live with us. I just knew he would," he added.

Mr. Wilson smiled and held out a hand. "I am glad, my boy, that you decided to come to us," he said. "You won't regret having availed yourself of our offer. Nor will you find us hard taskmasters. We hope that you will be happy here."

"I—I love the river, sir," Snowy said solemnly. "It has always been a good friend to me, and—and it looks as if I were leaving it by coming here."

"But are you leaving it, my boy? You think you have mastered the stream, whereas you have merely been lucky—Snowy for luck, eh? How would you like to captain a vessel of your own?"

"Mr. Wilson! Sir!" Tears welled from the lad's eyes at the thought. "That could never be possible, yet I once said I would, and I meant it at the time. I'm only—"

"Anything is possible to him who has the will to do," Mr. Wilson urged. "Here is my proposition. My son, Eric, needs a boy of your age and disposition to take him in hand. He is not used to these parts, and you are. I am satisfied that you are trustworthy, and I believe that you like my son."

"Like him? Mr. Wilson, I love Eric," Snowy said feelingly. "I'd do anything for him, sir. He is game for anything," he added, suddenly remembering his first meeting with the boy.

"I want you to be a friend of Eric's always; to teach him what you know of the river; to row and to swim and all those things."

"I should like to," Snowy said quietly.

"In return," Mr. Wilson said, "I shall have you educated so that you can get your river pilot's certificate. Are you agreeable?"

A look of determination came into the river boy's eyes. "I am, sir. A river pilot! With perhaps my own river vessel! Gee, that sounds wonderful. It's a dream, surely."

"A dream that will one day be a reality, I am sure," Mr. Wilson observed. "We won't bother about study for a few days; that will give you a chance to get used to things here. Eric will show you around, I know."



"COME ON," HE SAID BRIEFLY, "I'LL SHOW YOU."

Show Snowy around! Eric was almost bursting with eagerness to do so. It was almost too good to believe that the river boy had actually decided to accept his father's offer.

"Come on," he said briefly, "I'll show you."

Mr. Wilson had quite a lot of land that fronted on the river and extended back for over two miles. Cattle grazed on the rich flats, while many acres were given over to the growing of cotton and maize.

"This," said Eric, as he approached a man who had just flung himself from a broncho, "is Mr. Keeto, Father's new manager—Mr. Amos Keeto," he added.

Snowy grinned broadly. "Buzz and I are old friends," he said.

"And not too much of the 'Buzz'," warned Mr. Keeto but he smiled and said, "Yes, Eric, I've known Snowy since he was a bit of a kid. What's he doing round here? Have you grown tired of the river, boy?" he asked, as he turned suddenly from Eric to Snowy.

The river boy sighed. "No," he answered, after a while, "but I've—"

"He is coming to live with us, Mr. Keeto," Eric explained. "To teach me all he knows."



AMOS KEETO WAS A HARD MASTER.

"And that isn't much," Keeto said. "Buzz, indeed!" he murmured.

Eric was inclined to be indignant for a while. In his opinion his friend was about perfection in all things.

Amos Keeto was a hard master, demanding the very best from all who worked under him. Even Eric, when he undertook a task, must keep up to the mark. Keeto criticized him when his work did not come up to the standard expected by the foreman, and praised him when he thought the boy had done his best.

Eric was all impatience to coax his new friend down to the river. He wanted to get into Snowy's boat and learn to row, as his father had suggested. He was leading the way to the stream when Snowy motioned to him to stop and listen. Mr. Keeto was talking to a fresh faced youth.

"Can you ride?" he asked the lad.

"That's a new hand," Eric explained. "That is, I don't know whether he has been engaged or not. He called last night and asked for work."

Snowy nodded. "Old Buzz is putting him



"I'LL GIVE YOU A BIT OF A TEST."

through his paces," he suggested, with interest. He knew Keeto better even than Eric did, and scented something good.

"He looks as if he has just come from college," Eric said, also growing interested. "I wish I were as old as he. Look at his shoulders."

"You will be, some day—and as strong," Snowy declared.

"Can I ride?" the youth said, facing Keeto

bravely. "I can ride anything on four legs." He hitched up his trousers and drew nearer to his questioner.

"Can you, now?" Keeto snorted. "I've met your sort before. You're a boaster, that's all. Anyway, we need an extra hand. I'll give you a bit of a test and see how you get along. I like your nerve; it's refreshing after the usual whining of newcomers."

"Righto, skipper; that'll do me," was the answer. "I'm yours as soon as you give the signal."

"You think a morsel of yourself, don't you?" Keeto remarked in his characteristically blunt fashion. He looked at the young fellow for a full minute without saying a word. Then he said: "You'll get all that nonsense taken out of you if you remain on this ranch. It's workers we want here, not boasters."

"I'm game to risk it, Mr. Keeto."

The foreman's face broke into a grin as his eyes rested on a young mare that had never been ridden. Many had tried to break her in, but all had failed. He decided to test the boastful lad on this mare. Before giving him his final test, however, Keeto chided the youth almost to desperation.



MANY HAD TRIED TO BREAK HER IN.

"What's that blue ornament round your neck?" he asked, bringing his eyes back to the applicant for a position. "Is it to keep the flies from walking down your back, or the mosquitoes from biting you?"

Keeto's humor was crude; his manner was willfully irritating. If the youth had known him better he would have realized that the man was deliberately trying to irritate him; as it was he flushed under the taunt.

"Be sure to keep it clean, now, lad," the foreman cautioned. "You won't get another one like it here. What is your name, anyhow?"

"Charlie Addison," the youth answered readily. It was evident that he did not relish the coarse raillery of Keeto. Nevertheless, he made no attempt to answer back. He merely stood there earnestly gazing at the man.

The river boy interceded on behalf of Addison.

"Let him alone, Buzz," he said. "You were young yourself, once—a long time ago—and green, too. I remember the time when the cows used to chase you, thinking you were grass. You're only trying to get him rattled."

"Mind your own affairs," Keeto snapped.

"I know what I am doing. Mr. Wilson wants the best, and I'm going to see that he gets it. I was born in the saddle, and, unless Addison can ride, he isn't of any use here."

The fresh-faced youth looked his thanks to Snowy and then turned to Keeto, as if inviting further taunts.

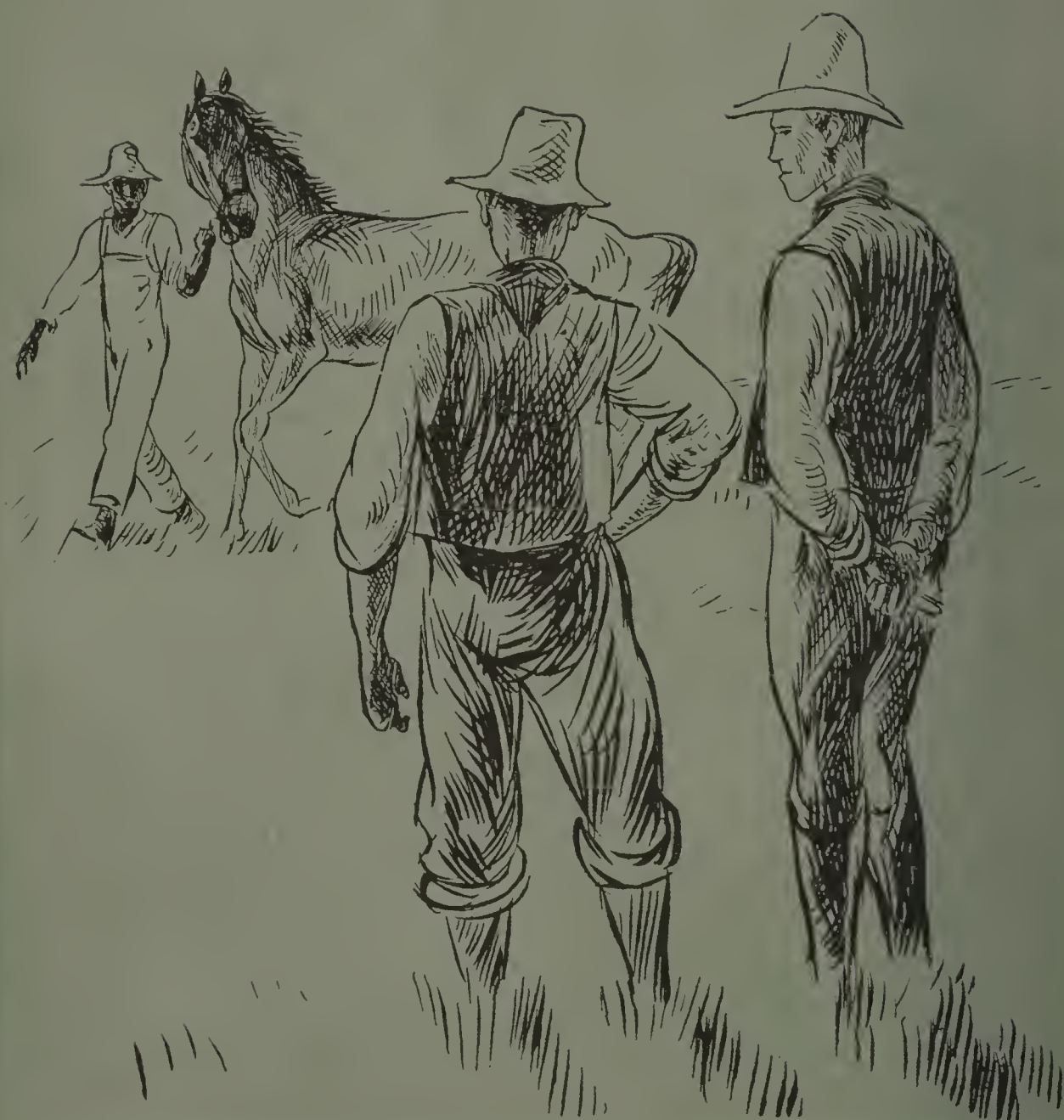
"You say you can ride, eh? Good. We'll give you a trial," said Keeto as he turned to one of the men. "Catch Molly and bring her around. This youngster says he can ride. I want him to show me."

"That's a nice-looking little thing," Addison remarked, as the horse was led up.

A nice little thing! Molly was the queen of the stables, a thoroughbred, the best bit of horseflesh on the ranch—and the wildest. She never showed her temper until an attempt was made to ride her. Then her whole nature changed, and she became a terror.

"She's all right," Keeto agreed, "and well-bred, too. But she isn't any good to you, sonny. She'd buck you to pieces in less than a minute, and then dance on your remains. What do you know about horses, anyway?"

Eric stepped forward to interfere, but



"SHE'S ALL RIGHT," KEETO AGREED,
"AND WELL-BRED, TOO."

Snowy held out a restraining hand. He saw the chance of some fun ahead, and he didn't want it spoiled. Nevertheless, he flashed a warning to the newcomer.

"She's a regular bad 'un," he said, with a sly glance at Keeto. "I wouldn't advise you to try to ride her."

"I don't mind trying," Addison said, stepping forward. "I don't reckon it's much to ride a buck-jumper. I've seen them at shows."

"I'll tell you what," Snowy said, again glancing at Keeto. "If you can sit on that mare for five minutes, I believe old Buzz—Mr. Keeto," he corrected quickly, noticing the frown on the manager's face, "I believe he'd give you a job, with a good bonus thrown in for luck."

"I will," Keeto agreed, grinning broadly. "If you can stick on Molly for five minutes, you're right for permanent work. But, mind, I take no responsibility if anything happens. It isn't any use your saying you're hurt. We haven't got time to run you into a doctor, either."

Addison walked over to the harness shed and picked out a saddle and bridle. Molly



"I DON'T RECKON SHE'S SO VERY WILD."

stood like a lamb as he drew near to her. Without any difficulty he put on the bridle.

"I don't reckon she's very wild," he announced, as he threw on the saddle and quickly buckled the girths.

Molly began to plunge at the unfamiliar weight.

"You'd better not try it, young man," Keeto said, looking round to see that there was no sign of Mr. Wilson.

He half regretted that he had suggested that Addison should ride Molly, but the newcomer was so boastful that he felt justified



MOLLY BUCKED—ONCE, TWICE, THRICE!

in taking him down a peg or two. He had expected the other to back out as soon as the horse was produced.

“She’s a rough young thing,” he warned, “and it’s the off-season for funerals in these parts.”

Charlie Addison disregarded the warning. He chose his time well. Awaiting a favorable opportunity, he put one foot in the stirrups, and in a trice was on Molly’s back.

Keeto could not fail to notice the way he did it. He began to stare.

Molly bucked—once, twice, thrice! She bucked worse than any other horse had ever bucked. It wasn’t merely pig-rooting, but real, honest-to-goodness, straight-out bucking. She seemed to know that something was expected of her, and put her whole heart into trying to get rid of her rider.

Addison stuck to her in a manner that astounded Keeto. The horse, tired after a while, eased a little, and then suddenly darted forward like a bullet from a rifle.

She dashed past Snowy and Eric, and, clearing a little bridge, was soon flying over the plains. Some time later, Addison brought

her back at a gentle canter, covered with foam, yet perfectly subdued.

"Well, I'm bothered!" Keeto gasped, when he found his voice. "Who in the name of fortune are you?"

"Me? I'm Charlie Addison," was the answer as the youth dismounted, patted the horse, and then calmly rearranged the blue handkerchief round his neck.

"Charlie Addison!" Keeto exclaimed disgustedly. "That doesn't mean a thing to me."

"It's my name," the youth declared. It was his turn to smile. "But I used to be known as Eddie Makepiece, the champion rough-rider of Jigger's Circus.

"You know Jigger's Circus, sir," he said, innocently. "It's an off-shoot of Barnum and Bailey's. I suppose I am engaged?"

The manager swallowed dryly. "Yes, there's a job waiting for you. Anyone who can beat me isn't too bad."

"Thanks, Mr. Keeto." Addison turned to Snowy. "I've seen you before, boy," he remarked. "Where was it?"

"I was the boy who tried to ride the buck-jumping donkey of the show," Snowy told



"I WAS THE BOY WHO TRIED TO RIDE THE BUCK-
JUMPING DONKEY."

him. "I'm Snowy, the river boy, and this is Eric Wilson, my friend."

The show was over, so Snowy and Eric again started on their way to the river.

"My word, that was fine!" Eric exclaimed, as they walked down to the river and stepped into Snowy's boat.

"It just shows you how true the old saying is: 'Never judge a book by its cover.' I don't know who first said that—Abraham Lincoln, I suppose."

"Or Christopher Columbus," Eric added wickedly. "No, Snowy, that's a *very* old saying. But, couldn't that fellow Addison ride! I'll be able to do that some day," he went on, determinedly.

ERIC LEARNS TO ROW

CHAPTER 10

WE'LL go upstream," Snowy suggested, when they were seated. "I want to give you a lesson in rowing, and you will get more practice pulling against the current than going with it. Then, when you're tired, we'll just drift back."

Eric was an apt pupil, and he soon could turn the boat this way or that as desired merely by working the oars. Snowy was pleased with his progress.

"You're a great lad," he said, "and I'm glad that I decided to—to—"

"You haven't forsaken the river, Snowy," Eric said, noticing the look of disappointment on his friend's face. "When you have completed your studies you will be its master."

Snowy brightened up. "When I'm finished with you, Eric, there won't be a thing along the river to scare you. I'm glad I took you in hand."



"SH-H! I HEAR SOMEONE TALKING," HE WHISPERED.

"I'll be a river boy, too," was Eric's excited remark. "There will be two of us."

"That's right," Snowy conceded. "Pull into that little cove, and we'll have a bite or two to eat. You can't beat the river for giving one an appetite. I'm that hungry I could eat a horse, if it were served up properly."

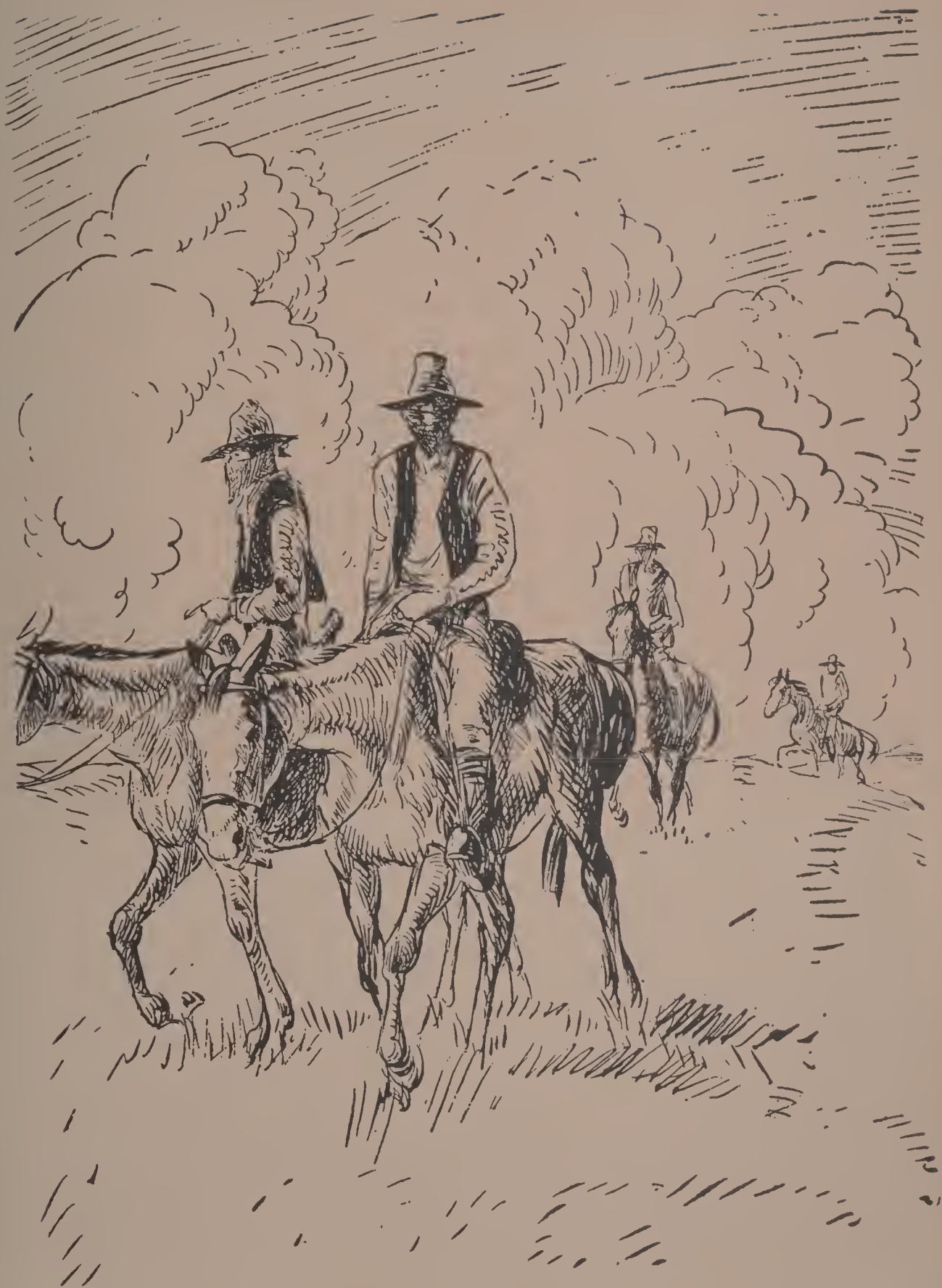
Eric was hungry too, but he did not say anything, yet Snowy had scarcely laid out the sandwiches they had collected from the kitchen when the boy began to eat.

Snowy was well versed in river lore, and soon had his young friend interested in stories about Indians and trappers and wild affairs of earlier days. Eric had burst into loud laughter at one of the stories, when Snowy suddenly held up a hand for silence.

"Sh-h! I heard someone talking," he whispered. "You stay here while I have a look."

He was away so long that Eric became anxious, and was about to go in search of him when the river boy returned.

"Into the boat, quick," Snowy urged. "There's a gang of roughs camped on the other side of the ridge. They are making direct for your father's place to steal some of his prize cattle. We'll get back and warn him."



"THEY ARE MAKING DIRECT FOR YOUR
FATHER'S PLACE."

“It’s certainly lucky you heard them. Snowy for luck, again! Shall I row?” said Eric.

The river boy smiled at his young friend’s eagerness. “You’d better let me do it this time, old chap. We cannot afford to waste any time. Your turn will come.”

Eric saw the wisdom of Snowy’s reasoning and, with a sigh, allowed his friend to take the oars. In an hour’s time they were back at home informing Mr. Wilson of the contemplated raid.

“I rowed up the river to the spot,” Eric proudly told his father.

“Good boy,” said Mr. Wilson encouragingly and then turned to his manager. “We must beat them, Keeto. What do you suggest?”

“I think I know the cattle they’re after, Mr. Wilson. Will you leave this to me? If I fail, you won’t see Buzz on the ranch again.”

“I will be glad to leave it to you though I would like to help,” replied Mr. Wilson.

“You can trust me, sir,” Keeto said. “I’ll watch your interests faithfully.”

“It isn’t that,” Mr. Wilson hurriedly explained. “I don’t want you to run all the risk.”



"I'LL SEND ADDISON, THE NEW MAN."

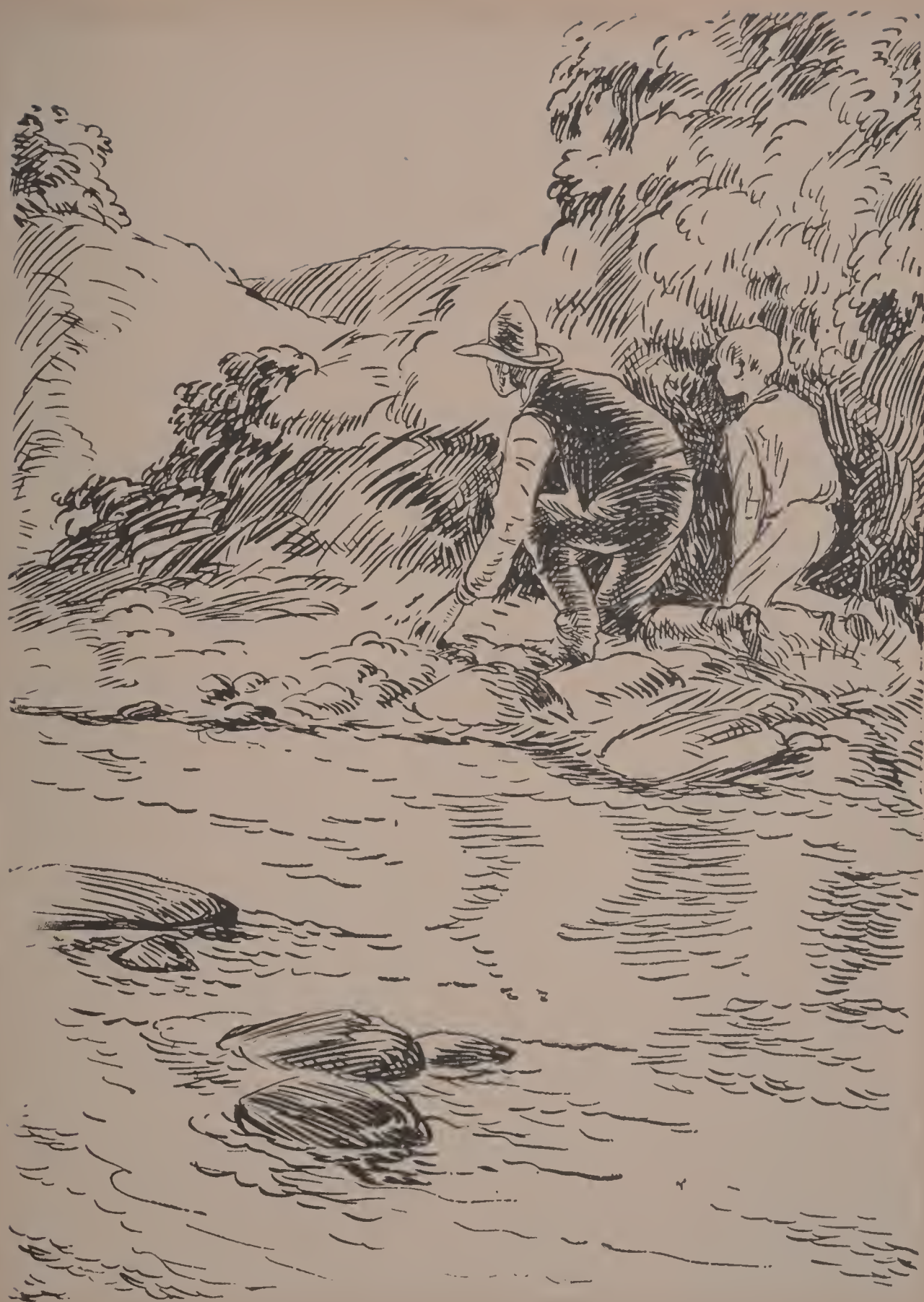
“There won’t be any risk. I’ll send Addison, the new man, to bring that bunch of cattle right into the enclosure, so that the herd will be under our eyes. We’ll give these raiders something to make them think.” He looked towards Snowy. “I’ll take Snowy with me, if you don’t mind. Eric will look after things at this end,” he added, diplomatically.

“Yes, you must not take all our men,” Mr. Wilson agreed. “We must have someone to watch over us.”

Keeto did not remain long with them. Instructing Addison and another hand regarding the herd of cattle, he took Snowy with him. In his mind he was fighting a great battle. He was torn between two things. He could either play Mr. Wilson false and lead the raiders to the cattle, later sharing in the proceeds, or he could act honorably towards his employer, who, he knew, trusted him implicitly.

“I’ll beat them,” he said aloud; and Snowy, understanding something of what was going on in the man’s mind, took no notice of the remark.

They followed the course of the stream, hid-



THEY FOLLOWED THE COURSE OF THE STREAM.

ing themselves as much as possible, for it was still light.

“You did us a great service, boy,” Keeto remarked to Snowy during a pause. “If we hadn’t known about the raiders we wouldn’t have been prepared, and the cattle would probably have been lost. As it is —”

“Never mind, Buzz,” Snowy returned ungraciously. “What I did, I did, and that’s the end of it. Young Eric is a great boy. I’d do anything for him.”

“Do you know why I brought you along with me, boy?” Keeto asked after a while.

“Do I know? Of course I do. To keep you company in case you got lonely,” Snowy suggested. “To hold your hand when the fight begins. In fact, Buzz, to look after you. What else would you want me for? Seriously,” the boy added, “I’m with you because we are friends.”

“You’re not far wrong,” Keeto agreed. “I brought you with me to back me up. There, I’ve told you. What do you think?”

“That you did the right thing, Buzz, old fellow.” Snowy glanced towards the river. “It’s a big thing to give up the old life. Somehow, I can’t just say how it all came about.”

"It came about," Keeto said earnestly, "because Mr. Wilson and his lad are so decent that you can't help yourself. Even the worst of us has something good inside, you know. Listen to me preaching to you, boy."

"Do you know what always kept me pretty straight, Buzz? It was Christopher Columbus. Go on, laugh; but it's true. He *was* and *is* my hero. I wish I'd been born a couple of hundred years earlier so that there were a few countries left to explore."

"There are still the Moon and Mars," Keeto suggested. "Anything is possible these days. What with radio, and flying, and automobiles, and submarines, I wouldn't be surprised if some day some daring young fellow—just like you, Snowy—doesn't set out to see what is doing in those other worlds. Come on; we'd better be moving. We've slackened down while we talked. We've got to beat these raiders."

Keeto need not have worried. Under the capable guidance of Charlie Addison, the youth he had thought to be a greenhorn, the cattle were rounded up and brought into safety. When the raiders appeared they were

greeted by a ring of determined-looking men. Details of the raid, which they thought to be secret, had become known! Thanks to the river boy and young Eric, Mr. Wilson had not lost a single head of cattle.

Snowy's luck was still holding. Once again he had reason to be thankful for his white hair. Snowy for luck!



"BUT THE INDIANS REFUSED TO HAVE ANYTHING
TO DO WITH IT."

ERIC GOES EXPLORING

CHAPTER 11

DO YOU know, Snowy, the historic spot where Columbus landed is not liked by the Indians?" asked Eric one morning several days after the attempted cattle raid. He knew his friend's weakness for Columbus and often

told him things that he had read about the great seaman.

“Why?” asked the boy, eager to learn anything pertaining to his hero.

“It was suggested that a home for aged Indians be built upon the spot,” Eric explained, “but the Indians refused to have anything to do with it. They think the place is unlucky, because it was the spot where the whites first landed in America.”

“Rubbish,” Snowy snapped. “It was the best day’s work that ever happened when Columbus landed on American soil. He had a lot to put up with, remember. But he stuck to it, just as I’m going to stick to my studies. I’m going to get my river pilot’s certificate in spite of everything.”

“That’s the way to talk. About the Indians, though,” said Eric wisely, “they think—”

“What does it matter what a few of them think? If Christopher Columbus hadn’t discovered America someone else would have.” There was a note of finality in the boy’s words. “What do you say to our doing a bit of exploring?” he suggested after a moment or two of thought. “There are plenty of places along

the river not yet properly examined. Who knows, we might find something really good. We could take my tent and camp out."

"I should like to, but I'm afraid Father and Mother wouldn't be willing."

"Why?" demanded Snowy. "You'd be all right with me. You can ride, and row and even swim a little—and fight, too, I reckon, if there was need for it. Where's the danger?"

"I don't know. I'll ask them," Eric declared; but his tone did not seem too hopeful. "They can only say no. Where would we go?"

"About a mile up the stream there's a wonderful little tributary. It is too small for big craft, but we could do it in our boat. I haven't been along it for a long time."

Eric lost no time in asking permission to accompany his friend. Mrs. Wilson shook her head, and glanced at her husband, hoping he would refuse the request. She didn't like the idea of her young son leaving her for any length of time. Camping out at nights, with only Snowy's tent to shelter him from the weather! She saw innumerable difficulties and dangers.

Not so Mr. Wilson. "Let the boy go," he

said. "It will be a wonderful experience for him; one that will be invaluable to him in after life."

"You'll take care of him," Mrs. Wilson pleaded, looking at Snowy.

"I'll guard him all right," Snowy asserted. "As I would my own brother. He's a plucky boy. You needn't worry on his account, ma'am."

The following morning, dressed in their oldest clothes, with no lunch except a loaf of bread and some butter, the boys were on the river. Needless to say, Eric was excited, but he did his best to hide this from Snowy.

Without any mishap they reached the little tributary Snowy had spoken of. Along this they went until they came to a little rocky peninsula where they decided to rest. They had not been long there before a big, burly man appeared. His eyes opened with amazement.

"Why," he exclaimed, "if it isn't Wilson's kid—and Snowy," he added catching sight of the river boy. "This is luck. There is such a thing as holding valuable young fellows like you for ransom, I believe. You beat us with



THE FOLLOWING MORNING THE BOYS WERE
ON THE RIVER.

the cattle, but you're not going to get the better of me this time."

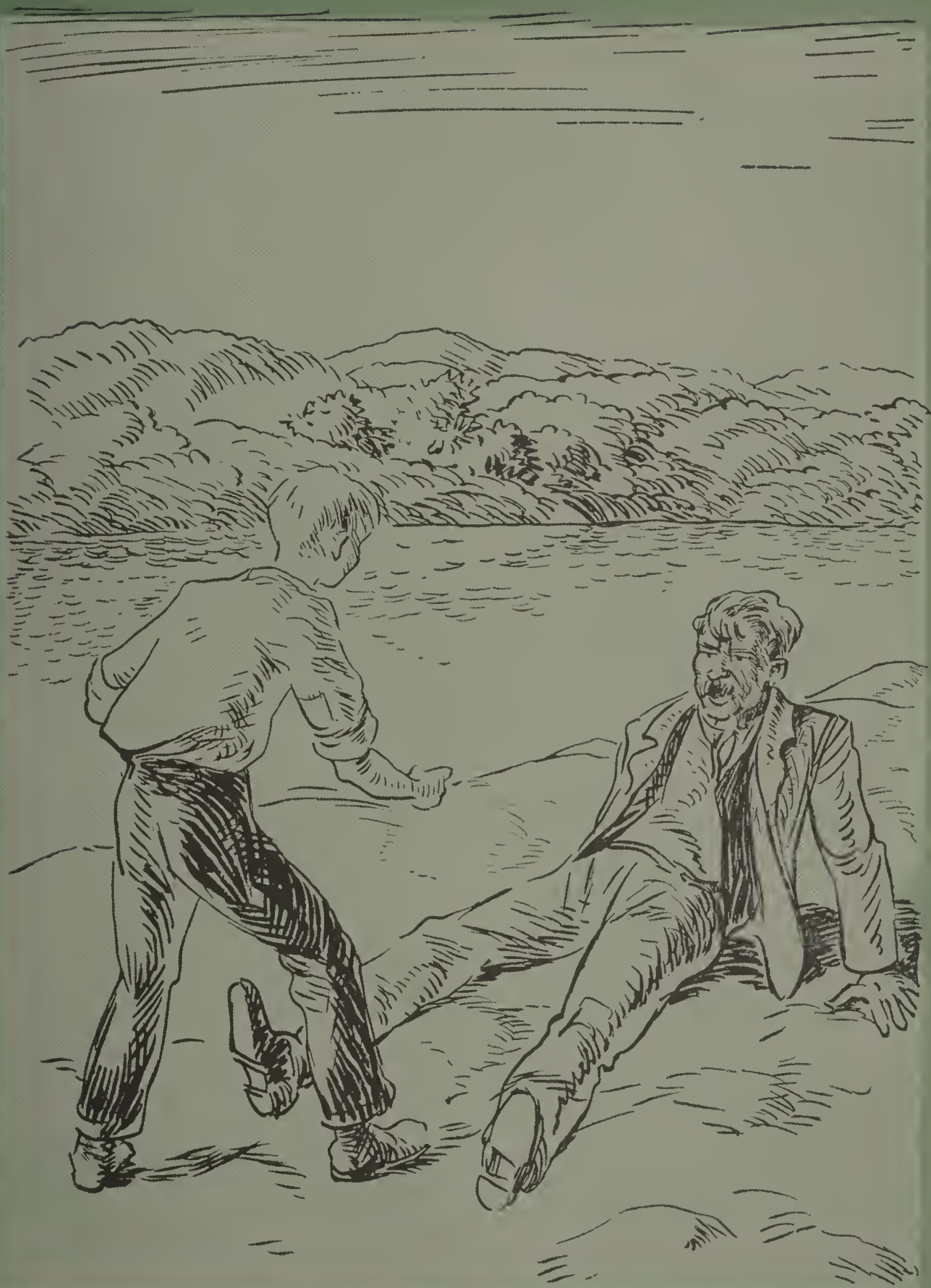
For the first time in his life Eric saw Snowy in a real fighting mood. Without a word, he darted forward and butted the intruder heavily in the stomach. The man was taken by surprise. He had not given a thought to a possible attack. As he fell groaning to the ground the two boys darted forward.

"Into the boat, Eric," Snowy shouted. "And lie low, in case he shoots; but I don't think he will. At heart he's a coward."

Two mighty pulls brought the boat well away from the bank, and by the time the man staggered forward the boys were almost in midstream, rowing rapidly with the current.

"I promised your mother I'd look after you," Snowy murmured. "We'd better get back. I didn't bargain to meet such wild men as our friend back there."

Silently Eric looked back. Perhaps Snowy was right! All the same, it was hard to have to forego the trip on which he had set his heart. Still, he had enjoyed every moment of what he had had. He had gone from the main stream along the little tributary, and he had certainly met excitement tinged with danger.



THE MAN WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE.

Soon they were back on the river, being carried down by the swiftly-moving current.

"Home!" Eric let out a joyous cry.

After all, home was the best place, with his parents, his friends, and his pets.

"Study for you tomorrow, Snowy," he teased, as they tied up the boat. "You've got to make good."

Snowy's chin went out determinedly. "I'm going to," he declared.

Snowy had definitely made up his mind to be a river pilot. His determination kept him at his studies through many long hours when the river was calling to him. He just *must* pass his examinations. Back to his studies he would bring his roving mind.

For five years Snowy lived with the Wilsons. He kept his object always before him and his studies always came first.

SNOWY MAKES GOOD

CHAPTER 12

IT WAS a beautiful morning. The grass, spread over the plains like a huge carpet of green, was wet with early morning dew. The river was in flood. Great trees, torn up by the roots, made it very dangerous for shipping.

But the captain of one large steamer had decided to risk it; he appeared to be sure of every point. His vessel was loaded with cargo, and he carried many passengers. Behind, he towed three barges, also laden with goods of every kind.

Everything about the steamer was new. Its brasswork was bright and shining. Its decks were spotless. At the wheel was the captain, a youth of about eighteen years.

It was Snowy, as lucky as ever. Young though he was, he had won his captain's license and was piloting his own boat. With



BEHIND, THE CAPTAIN TOWED THREE BARGES.



HE WAVED HIS CAP TO SOMEONE ON THE BANK.

Mr. Wilson's aid he had studied hard and this was the result.

As he passed the places all so familiar to him, his thoughts went back to the time when he had sailed that course in a small, open boat.

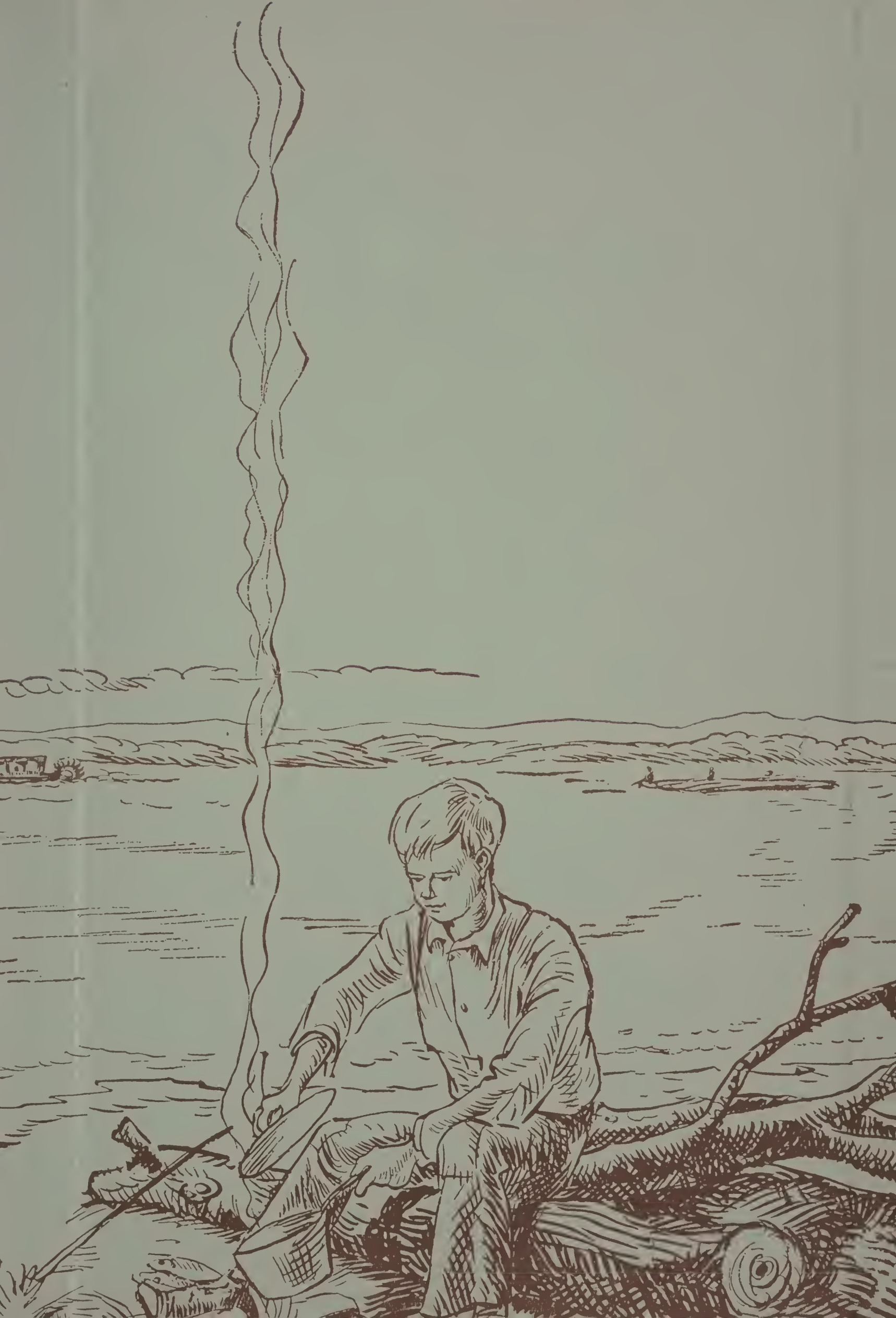
He passed by the old barge, still stout and strong, and he recalled his old friend, Ancient, and his sad story.

A little farther along was a big house. As the vessel drew near, the captain handed over the wheel to a sailor, while Snowy climbed to the highest point and waved his cap to someone on the bank.

An answering wave came back from the bank, and across the strip of water came the cry from Eric, who, though older, still regarded the river boy as his hero.

“I knew you’d do it. Good old Snowy, you were always lucky. Snowy for luck!”





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